Pierre Alexis Mével ▫

David Eckersley /

Frank Leibovici ✳

Juliet Jacques ○

Stranger)

✳ I think a chair is missing.

/ Yeah, is just us.

○ Yeah.

/ Yeah, ah... yeah just us.

David Eckersley: Yeah, just us in this Interesting, experimental, for us, slightly strange situation. It's funny how some of the things that I was just chatting to Angelica about, thinking about on, on the way here as well, is that despite the fact this is kind of 'without an audience' and in private, there also is an audience, and we are encouraged to speak freely and be experimental, and how we relate to it with the fact that we are also being recorded and is potentially something that will be published, even if it might be redacted form, as I kind of understand, and in consultation, I've been assured by Sam, in consultation with us.

So yeah, I was, I was thinking that maybe that would be something we could reflect on. I know that from what Sam said the space was quite important for Lara as well, so the kind of form of the event, the space, we have these keywords and they doubt we will get on to those as well, ahm that's what structuring it as well. But yeah, the kind of qualities of the event itself, I mean, this is, you know, I think one of the things Lara said was being, you know, trying to push people beyond that kind of comfort zone and I think also, and this is certainly something that puts me outside of my comfort zone, I thought I'd register that...yeah that but in a good way, you know? It's kind of, I'm excited-nervous rather than like, petrified for the situation.

✳ But Lara is really not coming today?

/ No, no.

✳ Really?

/ Yeah. The artist is not going to be here.

○ Are we recording? Is the artist 'On'?

/ Yeah. So maybe I think yeah, well just start with a kind of, reflect a little on, I suppose go around, introduce ourselves a little bit, reflect a little bit on our initial impressions of this, and maybe think about an early, early sense of how this notion of opacity relates to our own work, or what do we understand by it? That might be just an easy way in to start? So, I'm quite happy to go first, I suppose.

▫ Yeah, I can go first as well if...

/ Yeah?

◻   Pierre Alexis Mével: To take some of the pressure out, either way...

/   Well I'm gonna keep it quite short I think in a way, I mean, I think one of the reasons why I'm here is because I ran a series of study sessions, Nottingham Contemporary in the summer, that was based around the idea of the politics of opacity. Which connects to my research and I'm a co-facilitator, I've brought people up and we discuss various ideas around opacity, about clandestinity and invisibility, sort of cognate concepts. I suppose. So, my relationships with opacity has a kind of broad category of, comes through two things: one is on my research focuses around the concept of anonymity. Specifically trying to understand it is not as the way that is understood largely in kind of an online communication, as a way of protecting oneself, but actually is something that is, has a critical relation to the production of subjectivity. So, an 'aesthetics of anonymity' is kind of ideas I'm trying to kind of think about, rather than this kind of idea of protecting, masking for protection, as masking for transformational, masking for some, some sort of sensual aesthetic quality, I think. So that's my kind of ... oh, one other thing as well, is that opacity as I sort of understand It really comes from Martinique poet and philosophers Édouard Glissant, he talks about opacity as a kind of onto-ethical: so ontological and ethical condition of being human, and actually speaks about the idea of transparency or *transparence*, and the idea of something being knowable, as a very kind of Imperial-Colonial concept that was enlightening base, but also, in the post-colonial context in which he is writing, this idea of casting no ability over the colonial subject, which was a violence to the inherent opacity of human relations. So I'm interested in it from the kind of ethical-political position, that opacity is something, that is a kind of condition of human relations and that actually kind of the Imperial project and, particularly think about today's society, of a society that is very much based around the idea of everything being rendered transparent, as a kind of, as kind of violence of power in a way. But I'm also very aware that there are certain types of transparency that I think are important, like potentially institutional transparency as a kind of counter perspective. So, I suppose yeah, that's my kind of, this is sort of why I'm here and what I'm interested in.

/   Yeah. Yeah.

◻   Yeah?

/   Yeah.

◻   A lot of what you've just said kind of resonates on some level with my own work or just interest in general but I think I come at it from a completely different angle and in kind of preparation for today I was just trying to, just have a broad think about opacity and how it applies to my work and why exactly I was here and I think I might have just figured it out. I... there are really two ways that I could think about opacity, and the first one that maybe the more literal one is to do with its kind of visual property. You know?

Opacity, something that doesn't let a lot of light go through and I was trying to sort of take this as literally as I could and see whether it applied to my work at all and I could think of... I'm just going on big rumbles if you want to stop me just stop me! I work on with your description and make sure you're familiar with, with your description. So, are you familiar with the description to an extent? And when you write your description, you're trying to cater for a broad spectrum of people with visual impairments, including people who may see some of the light. You know? The light makes an impression on them, but you don't quite see the contours of shapes or don't see clearly what's going on in this case on the screen. And...

✳   Like the website "porn-for-the-blind"

☐   Is there?

✳   Yeah.

☐   And so, the way I was trying to think about opacity is, when you say that something is opaque, you're also saying that there is probably some meaning behind this opacity. There is the assumption that there is something to understand, but that you're not too sure what it is and how you can, you can access it. So, there is information, but all that information that you're getting fails to convert into meaning. It's there. There is something there. It just doesn't make sense. I know the description is kind of a catalyst: you're helping those shapes-impressions that, you know, your audience sees on the screen actually make sense, describe that someone is walking from the left and then you can see a shape sort of appearing on the left of the screen, this kind of thing. So, in that sense, I think the sort of distinction between formation in meaning is very... it's from information theory, is nothing new but I thought it was interesting for me in this case. And the second, sort of definition of opacity, which I think is already kind of metaphorical is to do with the meaning of text when we say that the text was the to fill more, or text, and any text, text in the broadest possible sense is opaque means that, you know, there's something not immediately understandable about it. And in the context of my own research, it's the word transparency that comes back the most often, not the word opaqueness necessarily, but I think there is a relationship with what you mentioned earlier David. So, I published a book that came out in June, I'm bringing my own interpret, I make it sound like I published like books every year, I don't, it's my first book, my first and only. And it's about the subtitling of African-American vernacular English into French. And the last chapter is the more conceptual chapter. It is about a translation studies scholar, which is called, who is called Lawrence Venuti, you might have heard of him, and he published a book in the mid-90s about the, which is entitled The translator's and invisibility. I have to get this right. And in which he talks about the way, in particular, the ways that translation has to be invisible in order to be acceptable. So, if you notice that something is a translation then it has failed essentially. And it opens with a quote by Shapiro which is quite eloquent: Shapiro says that the translation should be like a pane of glass: if you start noticing the little Bubbles and Imperfections, this is where you have a problem.

And Venuti completely disagrees with it. He says that it's a shame that we're hiding the fact of translation, that we should find ways to make it more, well, visible. And that this hegemony of transparency is a reflection of what he calls a xenophobic attitude at home: he is looking for, from a very Anglo-American perspective and imperialism abroad. We have to appropriate everything that's from outside of our culture and turn it into our own. And so, he disagrees with that, and in disagreeing with this in a way, I suppose is advocating for bringing back some form of opacity, although he never uses the word so, so, but in this case, it would be a meaningful kind of opacity. So, it goes against the definition. I was thinking of earlier when I said that opacity has information but no meaning, for him if you bring back this opacity straight away, It kind of...it's there for reasons, therefor it has, you can attach a kind of meaning to it. So yeah, that's my, that's my two senses. I have no way of reconciling these two kinds of opposing ideas. But I thought It might...say something.

/   Yeah for sure.

O   Right? I'm going to talk about transparency and opacity on the level of political organizing and organization, firstly with regards to kind of my own work and the use of it, and then more generally. In terms of my own writing about transgender subjects and transgender living, my approach was very much fostered by an awareness that we live in a society in which there's an awful lot of prejudice against transgender people and a lot of that was founded on ignorance, but not just ignorance due to a complete lack of discussion about the subject, but ignorance due to just a huge level of like misinformation and people outside of the trans community deliberately spreading misinformation, sensationalizing the subject or just outright lying about in the knowledge that they weren't likely to be seriously challenged. What struck me as the most likely kind of effective counter to that was an open and transparent, trans-led conversation about the realities of our lives, using my own life as a kind of springboard. And that's a tactic that definitely had its uses, from a sort of personal well-being point of view, you know, there was still a need to think carefully about which things you give away and which things you retain, because obviously once you make something open you can't close it again. You've given it away, that's that! So that was a very complicated process and you know something that was formed by the sort of political precepts that I had. I mean, I remember reading in about 2001, when I was a student, that a big problem for transgender people and politics was the apparent impossibility of making outsiders understand what our life experiences were like, so I thought well, I'm going to test that hypothesis with kind of limited results. I mean, one of the problems with that sort of transparency is you open up to a kind of community, you say to people who are kind of isolated: Look there are many more of you and there are resources and there are people and there is support, all of which is great. Obviously, you open up to your enemies, you know, you give up key points of attack, you give your enemies better understanding of you as well. So, working out what to make transparent and what to keep opaque was just a trial-and-error process really. And I find that interesting with regards to wider politics of information, you know, obviously the kind of emergence of WikiLeaks in the early part of this decade and its collapse into a kind of infighting and you know,

there's a cult of personality around Julian Assange and everything was kind of dispiriting though it's not a political project, you know? I never placed any great amount of hope or faith in it. And one of the most interesting conversations I had about Wikileaks was with a friend who just said; look it's a very neoliberal project in that there was a quiet market-driven impulse at its core, in the idea that you kind of put as much of the truth out there as possible, and then this sort of marketplace of ideas sorts it out. Which generally tended not to be the case actually. They put out all of this information and there was so much of it that lots of people just said, well, there's far too much to go through here, the media will edit it, but they'll edit it in a way that's either ideologically expedient, i.e. by just flagging up things that aren't particularly interesting, in the hope that the public will get bored with the story. With regards to that, I'm thinking about the redacted Prince Charles letters that were published a year or two ago that had been kept out of the news for a long time, because judges said they were *too much* in the public interest, in regard to the monarchy interfering in democratic politics. And when they were released, that the bits that were available were incredibly dull. if it was just that well, we don't care if Prince Charles has an opinion on gardening or something, it's really not interesting. And with Wikileaks a similar kind of thing happened, the leaks were along the lines of "American Diplomat says something derogatory about North Korea in private", of course they do, I'm not surprised by that. So with regards to making things transparent and keeping things opaque, I think, in order for that to be a politically effective strategy, it has to be very targeted and even then you have to accept that if you want to make things transparent, you relinquish some control over that, when you put things out into the world you don't know what's going to happen to them. So I find that very interesting and I mean, obviously as a contrast against opaque organizations, which are a huge problem politically as well, organizations that deliberately bend or distort or withhold information about their activities. It needs to be kind of reasonably obvious, an answer to the question of like well, who are you and how do we get rid of you? If we need to get rid of you, and obviously most political organizations don't make that clear for fairly obvious reasons, so I found that very interesting as well. So yeah, I find the, I guess the role of transparency and opacity and politics quite interesting. I got it coming from a quite different situation this perspective, but yeah. That's, that's my initial reaction to the topic.

✱   I will follow your thread, with WikiLeaks, by starting from a magazine I have been reading sometimes, which is Al Qaeda magazine, which was called *Inspire*. It started to be published around 2009-2010, something like that, and it had a very interesting section, which was called *open-source Jihad*. The magazine layout was, more or less, like the magazines you could find in the western societies-with a section about high-tech, a section about health, like: 'How getting in shape without weights?', for instance, while you're in the mountain, etc, etc. But they had this section in the middle of the magazine, which was called *open source Jihad* and they made a point, related to what you were saying: there were saying that, in fact, you could oppose secrecy and opacity: secrecy is an old model. When you set up an operation, a military operation, or a terrorist operation, well, you have to be very careful. You have to, first, you have to train people, to set up a group,

and it takes time, it takes resources and, but all the time, you have somebody who talks too much, who's a double agent, and everything collapses and you have to redo it again, and it's four extra years to reset everything. So, they said that doesn't work anymore. Instead of trying to keep secret everything we do, let's make it public. So, we're going to provide, we're going to publish everything about us. And that's what this *open-source Jihad* section is about. So they tell everything about their way of thinking, about the instruments they use, about their strategy, they publish everything. And you see it's like Wikileaks, in fact. There is so much information, that in fact, people don't know what to read and how to look through, inside. So, when we will publish recipes about *How to make a bomb in the kitchen of your mum with sweet potatoes and a clock*, well CIA or the Russian intelligence services, they already know about that. So, it won't teach them anything. But for other people who don't have this knowledge, it will be very helpful. There are, there will be many more information that these little tricks. But it will be lost in an ocean of data and in fact, in order to be able to know what are the relevant information, you need certain glasses, and we could call these glasses an aspectual vision, in a Wittgenstein term, like, you know, the same drawing can be seen either as a rabbit or as a duck... So, from this ocean of data, you can see just an ocean and nothing else, or you can see patterns. And in order to be able to distinguish, to see the patterns, you need in fact a certain perspective, and what means to have a certain perspective? It's in fact to know those keywords, to know a minimum of the language, and in fact knowing a minimum of the language means to belong to a group, which means that the vision is connected to a community. If you belong or If you're in the process of belonging to a group, suddenly, you will get the language of the group, suddenly, you will be able to see forms or shapes in a foggy, overwhelming data substrate. So, I thought it was interesting this opposition between secrecy and opacities; opacity is not connected to secret, opacity is connected to publicity. The second thing... so, it goes also in your, in your direction, because making everything public and making everything opaque, is connected but it also has something to do with the ecosystem of things and with the structure, or the infrastructure of things. I was stricken, ten minutes ago when I realized that the artist won't be present. And it stroke me for this reason in that... I can understand the reason of the setup, let's say. I can also understand the shape of this event today, because, in fact, it's very common in the art world to have things like that. So, let's say, it's a classic format: you don't know anything about what is going to happen, but you set up a situation where it can happen. However, it's not a self-generating event. The opacity of this format is not self-generated. It has been processed and produced by an institution, by a team, and Sam and Angelica were saying before that it took them a lot of work. It took them a huge amount of energy, etc. etc. What I find interesting is that you could perfectly keep the opacity of this format while being more transparent about the process itself. But, here, even the process is considered as secret. We don't know how they selected the guests. They did not communicate at all about all the sequences of work that have happened since the beginning. And that is... This is a little bit... I wouldn't say disturbing because it's too strong, it's okay, but I'm wondering if it would not bring something to the project to be more explicit about the process of sending up an opaque event.

And it comes back to what you were saying, that opacity sometimes is something to protect a form of life, let's say. It's not always obvious that we should make everything transparent and some practices need this opacity to be protected. Some practices are jeopardized by light or by transparency. But in an artwork, or in an art project, I feel the opacity has to be connected with the publicity. It's, it doesn't matter, I mean, it can be public and opaque at the same time. However, giving access to the process of the making doesn't jeopardize, doesn't endanger the artwork. For me, it's even necessary, so it can be debated, it can be, it can be used, it can be understood by the public it produces. If you don't have access to it, you just put up a stone in the middle, and you say: 'Okay, people, deal with that!'

□ The conspiracy theorist in me thinks that this is precisely what we've been put here for, and that's precisely what's happening that, what do we have all in common? And you know, we've got this process and now we're talking about this process. It seems to be kind of self-reflexive, a meta-society.

✻ Yes, it's a script. ok, we have a script. We don't know each other and we hold together just through the script. And spend the day together talking. It's fine. I mean, it's like a music score: musicians don't know each other before they meet for the rehearsal and they get along and they play together. We don't need to know each other before.

O It's kind of an aleatory music score, maybe, yeah, makes it sound overly scripted, I think, but that yeah, you know, it's really-

✻ Oh yeah, you can have open-ended-

O John Cage, sort of just a prescription something.

✻ Yeah, very loose, very vague of a score.

O Yeah-

✻ Yeah, but still, I mean, but it's, it's not unexpected to have a score or script which produces a group like today, but I would have expected a little more, let's say, access to the process of making it. For me, it doesn't weaken the project itself.

/ Yeah. Yeah. I think I mentioned before, or I haven't either, one of my kind of reflections on this when, when some frame is this is a kind of an anti-panel discussion. And, you know, the panel discussions become a fixture of cultural institutions. It's not got a public audience in that regard and there's a kind of opacity to, you know, and also this kind of like hyper information that you speaking about rendering things opaque. I don't know about you, but when I was faced with all those keywords, I was like well, I mean, you know, that's a potentially an Infinite combination of things to you can connect those. It's almost like you need a certain lens to be able to read that data in a way.

But this kind of idea of a sort of anti-panel discussion seems to me to have a kind of institutional critique attached to it. But of course, the, one of the principal parts of the, you know, the art movement or the or the understanding with me are what about institutional critique was, it rendered the function in the process of the institution transparent. So, I mean, I agree, I think you can keep the opacity of an event and also, you know, render transparent the processes that lead up to it. So, and one of my friends asked me last night when I mentioned that doing this like: 'Well, this seems a bit strange, you don't know anything about the process so, are you all getting paid the same?' for example, like, certain questions like this. We don't need to necessarily answer or whatever, but these were the things that he was thinking about.

✳ He is right-

⭘ Yeah.

/ And I think it's interesting that I actually I do agree. I don't necessarily have to have one and not the other. They're not diametrically opposed that I think their intention with each other opacity and that's what I picked up from what everybody is saying that there's clearly a tension between these two terms transparency and opacity, but it, I mean, I think you can have one or not. You don't have to have them being in a certain degree at the same time and it still functions so-

✳ What I considere to be the ecology of an artwork, when you have, let's say, two or three monochromes from three different painters, they are not the same objects. And Malevich monochrome is not a Yves Klein monochrome or a Ryman monochrome, or a Manzoni monochrome or an Ad Reinhardt monochrome, and you can make the difference because you know the trajectory of the painters and you know their other works, and you know their practice, and there are obviously different practices. So, to go back to the expression you are using about "opacifying interpretation", I mean, if we have the mediations of the artwork, the practices of the artwork invisible or transparent, we are still in a very modernist approach. If we make the mediations opaque, which means visible, in fact, it makes a big difference, because, when you point something opaque, it doesn't mean that you understand everything about it, but you know it exists, and it's a big difference, you know. It's like in the, in the military service, when they do their military archives, it's a big difference between erasing a file and letting the file existing and put 'top secret' on it. So, you know, it's not public, you cannot have access to it, but you know it's there. So, in ten, thirty, fifty years, a hundred years, somebody will have access to it, but it's in the index, so it's in the list of the components of the thing. And here, we don't have we don't know anything about the index. We don't know who are the actors. We don't know how much time, of exercise, of resources, it took them and for me, it's a pity.

⭘ I've always been very attracted to art. Brought a sense that, you know, where are the processes of its construction on the outside and I'm thinking here of anything from say like the stand-up comedian Stewart Lee who is very upfront about the way he uses language, the way he constructs jokes and a lot of his humour

comes from just explicating the processes plain coming to the punch line, or I'm thinking about like some of the bands that were around in the post-punk era like Scritti Politti, who very early on their record sleeves would just print the entire process of recording and releasing a record with a list of all the people and processes that fed into that. But I remember reading the great music critic Simon Reynolds. He wrote about Scritti and he said the problem with this sort of demystification is that it's very interesting but there's nowhere to go after? There's this idea that if you demystify all of your processes then you leave your audience with just an open space. And yeah, it can leave you feeling a bit stranded, I think.

✱   What is an open space?

⭕   Well, I think it's a sort of a blank space, I guess to demystify a space as I think so conceptually kind of clear it, you know? Mythologies and mysteries are a things that I think culture is built on, the artist responds to and yeah, I mean I, I do wonder if he's right about this process of demystification, and what happens if you make everything too clear.

✱   But cleared doesn't mean *désert*... desert in English? Because in fact, I would say it's not a blank space, It's a more populated space. We are four, but to set up this event there were at least four, five, six, other people who had to work on around the table. And so, we would be already ten and probably there are other open tables like that. We will be thirty. So, I would say it's a more populated space and we have to negotiate with more people than to be just by ourselves popping up like that.

⭕   I was really interested in what you were talking about earlier and I'd like to pbring the discussion back to what you were talking about with Open Source. You had this idea of just putting out so much information that you know, the problem becomes the people at the other end working in the assumption that everything you say and do is going to be monitored and that you can take control of that by making information public yourself and it becomes a political tool kind of surfeit of information acting as a weapon of confusion. I'm thinking of the way that Vladislav Surkov, who's involved with the Putin government, took these sorts of techniques from, kind of relatively underground art collectives, like Voina in Russia, and made it into an aspect of government policy. Just put out all sorts of conflicting information about what the government is doing to the point where it's impossible to parse, as there's just, just so much there. Metahaven responded to this really well with their film *The Sprawl* last year. Which, you know, things like these kinds of army of trolls, you know working up these content labs and, and generating this era of paranoia with their existence. You know, the problem doesn't become so much what information they putting out because that becomes almost meaningless; the problem becomes Why are they doing this? What do they want? Because with that amount of information so the underlying motives become pretty much impossible to... to work out.

✱   Yeah. Yeah, it's impossible to work out. But also, it generates very various forms of public, of collectives.   **9**

To go back to this example, the first title, the title of the first issue of the magazine was *How to make a bomb in the kitchen of your mum?* and, and of course, intelligent services know that, but it means that for people, individuals who don't know that, then it becomes possible to do it. Then you have other data saying something or teaching something more, which requires more skills. So you produce a second level of audience, of public or activists, and so on, and so far. So, which means that by publishing so much information, you're generating various groups, unexpected groups, because you don't know, you don't monitor anymore the production of the groups, you let it to the will of individuals, or it's a self-organisation. So, you have professional organisations, which will be able to rely on a certain group of data, and individuals, who have nothing to do with that, who don't have experience, who are really what we call in French *bras cassés,* broken arms because they are really not handy. They want to do a terrorist action, but then they didn't check the car and the car gets broken on the road and it, I mean, it really happens. When you look at the archives of the history of terrorist groups, all the times, they did not put gas, the engine broke, there is a strike on this very day, etc. etc. So you accept not to be able to control the audience, to control the public anymore. So it's also another understanding of what means of production. The historical model is: you have the producers and then you have the public. While with this overflow model it's a continuous line in fact: you cannot tell anymore who are the producers and who are the consumers or the audience, because, in fact, the public is the producer also.

/   Which is a very kind of... which fits in a modern idea of a kind of networked world of decent power, and also as a kind of thinking about, a sort of, as that as a kind of resistance to dominant power centres, that's also something that's very difficult to manage, because where do you look. I mean, there's no centralised organisation where something is produced perhaps in secret and then eventually reveals itself and concealment for an action which might be there. Because I'm thinking back to what you were saying about the idea of political organisations in secret and kind of secret societies with that might sort of render themselves visible through an action or kind of proclamation or something? that kind of that model of sort of consumer Revelation has completely gone. I mean, Why do you look at me? you need to, do you need to also have the lens that is perhaps what is kept secret in a way to read this kind of thing? and that's I don't know, Something that's very difficult to-

✱   Either they are kept secret, or they are produced through the production of the groups?

/   Yeah.

✱   It's the groups who produce their own glasses according to the situation; the local situation, according to their needs, to their agenda. You don't know how the elements are going to be connected. You have a huge amount of data, and you have to find a way to connect them but the techniques to connect those data is the production of the group itself.

☐ We have the important bits in the mass of information the massive data that is available in the context of ppen source Jihad for instance. This only comes to light when some of these things that are mentioned or actually realized you know that when they, when they become acted upon they've also become demystified. That was important with it's like you can only know after the act is committed, what is actually, what was actually relevant in the mass of data.

✳ Yeah. You're right.

☐ So, you're always you know, you're always one step behind the game.

✳ Yes, I mean that's true for the institutions. For instance, when this magazine was released, Guardian wrote a paper. They thought it was a fake, that it was probably published by intelligence services to make fun of those groups. But when there was the Boston Marathon attack by the two Chechen teenagers, and they found the issue, this issue, in their bedroom, they realized that they had to take it more seriously. So that's true for the institution. But for, I would say, for academics, for scholars, or for artists, who are trained to see the potentialities of models in advance - because we don't have to pay the price of changing big infrastructures - we are also more sensitive to that, so we can, can maybe sense ? foresee?

○ Yeah. Yeah.

Pre-act, I think.

☐ There is an element of gambling. If you know you're sensing that there is something there, that it potentially exists. But it still reeling on, you know, people taking over.

✳ Yes, you're right. It's also a question of weight. When you're by yourself, you're lighter that when you're a State, or when you're a big corporation, because when you're a big Being, it's harder to move, it takes more time.

╱ Pick turning circle-

✳ And it's more expensive also to make a new change. So, the smaller you are, the faster, and you are, as you say, always one strike, one step ahead of the game. Yeah. So, it tells also something about scale. For political action, small scales are always... not always better, but sometimes more efficient, maybe, at least for a certain time, for a certain period of time.

╱ When I wanted to come back a little bit now since we're talking about, sort of political organizing and political groups and the idea that you brought up to about been talking about how political groups should be transparent in order that we have the capabilities to get rid of them or whatever. That's great. We were thinking a kind of a democratic voter sort of voter Democratic kind of system, but there's

something that I've read about recently where Someone writes that when it, in a kind of condition of total transparency that the idea of political time and action changes because you don't have that time away from a kind of exposure to scrutiny or whatever to plot and to plan for ideas to change into the forged. And so, there's something about and I just picked up on this idea of this kind of like total visibility or total transparency or hyper-information and the temporal connection that seem to come out and what you were saying that I thought we could maybe explore in a way.

O   Yeah. I mean that's interested me with regards to the rise of kind of the alt-right in the US and you know, obviously their noted support for Donald Trump and everything was out in the open. If you knew it was out in the open, the difference between something being in public and people actually looking at it. And the way the alt-right kind of organized was to use the forums – Reddit to an extent but primarily 4chan and they have these alt-right groups and they communicate through memes which were kind of ironic and not ironic at the same time. So, you know, there's a lot of hiding in plain sight and of course, lots of people just thought oh, they're just a bunch horrible right-wing kids, just ignore them, and all the time, these people were working out a thesis through discussions on these forums. And again, they understood that their politics were sort of in some ways taboo. I mean, you hear a lot of right-wing people say, "oh, we're not allowed to talk about immigration" and meanwhile, you go into any newsagent, the front page of every right-wing newspaper is nothing but that topic but they sort of understood that in "polite society". They know people disapprove of their opinions and so a key part of their tactics was to say "don't tell people how you intend to vote". Don't be open about your politics in front of "Normie", but they would have this secret-not-secret space where they organized and nobody really realized what they were doing until it was too late. And now there's this huge upsurge of far-right activity, including neo-Nazis in the White House as a result of that kind of mode of organizing. I think it's more difficult for the left and radical left because the radical left is always had a tendency to wear its disagreements on its sleeve and you'll see very public forums like Twitter and you know, it's not hard for people who are ideologically opposed to the radical left to find examples of the radical left tearing itself apart and the same scrutiny isn't given to the far right because people expect them to be more opaque, I think, and so aren't really looking into them. I don't know.

☐   I think it takes us back to something that you mentioned at the beginning from to do with the community and networks forming as a result of this kind of Open Source. Jihadism here. We've got existing communities in existing Network. Seems that. these manifestations are a way of reinforcing actually membership to a particular group to a particular community or to reinforce the bonds between the different members of that community like to go back to your point do the communities form through open-source Jihadism or is there something like a core shared element that's there, to begin with and then the kind of material. Helps crystallize that element and maybe give a clearer shape or Contour to, to the community.

✱   Well, it depends on the situations, but for this specific topic, what I noticed, by going through the chat rooms and forums, is that they are very heterogenous.

☐   I was going to say actually sorry. I'm just cutting you off. I was going to mention my own Facebook feed which is completely sanitized probably partly through my own actions, but they're not deliberate. I'm not deliberately trying to sanitize my Facebook because if you look at my Facebook wall, you know, it's, it's all lefties. But it's not really for my elections. Like there is a kind of almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy. There is a, it sanitizes itself, it seems. Sorry, carry on.

✱   No, it's a.. Four or five years ago with Sam, I was presenting a piece about, let's say, propaganda, propaganda songs that you can find on YouTube, and when you look at the lyrics, they are terrible. But once again, those songs don't pop up self-generated, they are composed by composers, they are performed by musicians, they are recorded in music studios, even if it's a basic one like this, and they are broadcasted, and they are traded. And the place where they are traded are the forums and chat rooms. And when you have a look at the conversations; you realize this heterogeneity. For instance, I remember one guy writing: 'Please don't send me war songs which have instruments, because instruments are forbidden in Islam, so I only accept choirs, a cappella songs, with little drumming, but, I mean, it's debated, so mostly voices, and, if you want, drums.' Nobody answered, and three days later, he wrote back and he wrote: 'I was kidding LoL, send everything you want.' So, you see the level of the norm, of normativity, is very flexible. The guy is trying something, it doesn't work, so, he said: 'Okay, I'm more flexible.' You can send war songs with instruments. Another guy wrote: 'Oh, I love those songs from Bosnia and Kosovo. I wish I would understand what they mean.' Which was very surprising for me because you're trading war songs because of the content and suddenly like a good French guy, singing English songs without understanding a word of the English song, the guy was saying that he doesn't have access to the meaning of the songs. So, you see, you have this group of people who are here for different reasons. They are not all strictly oriented with one agenda. Of course, the little core group, which will do the military operation, will be more determined and that they will have a stricter agenda. But inside the group, you have different groups; and, and this is very loose: you have people who enter, people who go out, people who stay... It depends on which platform of visibility you're using: if you're using a chat or a forum, it's very loose. If you're using a site of operation, it's smaller and, and tougher. it depends on when and where you look at.

╱   So just there we've come back to this word about, of visibility as well, as what struck me from the conversation as well, so far, is that we're definitely kind of talking around, about opacity and when I think about opacity, and certainly definitely saying this is not about invisibility, or about not being visible, being rendered invisible and I found that that struck me, actually when you were talking Alex about the idea of introducing a certain type of opacity or kind of a granular nature to translation that was actually making something visible rather than, because I think often times when we have these conversations or when you mention the word opaque

or opacity in common parlance, people tend to think about it as something that stops light passing through, so, therefore, becomes a form of, or a scale towards absolute invisibility and what we're most definitely saying here is that opacity is not about necessarily being invisible. In fact, we can have a hypervisibility that renders something opaque can I think that's actually a really important concept.

✱   That's cinema.

/   Yeah, absolutely.

✱   Projection of light on a wall or a screen.

/   And I think that's a really, I think that's a really important point and just to something like a pure transparency can actually render things completely and utterly invisible as well. So actually, what we think about this in conceptual terms often the commonplace or common parlance understanding of these words is actually rendered insignificant or not insignificant, but in explaining incorrect I think that's quite an important, important thing. I'm pointing to a sense of tension; I think that's come for a lot of these things as well. It's always a kind of I mean, I'm going to go back to sort of that kind of sense of a sort of political tension as well what to reveal what to conceal or you know, the idea that, you know, there's a certain scale about political efficacy that needs to be negotiated. And I think that's something interesting talking about, that as well, you... About how we're not, we're actually thinking about the way that... You talked about a continuum in terms of how they're not just, there isn't that nice pair of glasses that pre-exists that we can put on to see but these glasses are produced in the moment and I don't kind of know where I'm going with this. I've lost my source of threat a bit, but this idea of a sort of tension between different registers of transparency and opacity and also a kind of like temporal scale I suppose interest me. I'm going to kind of stop because I think that I've just confused things in a way-

☐   Transparency is something that can be fantasized, I think as well. I try and give you an example from my own field. I know if you've ever heard of the legend of the Septuagint, which is a religious death text. It's part of the Old Testament. And it was the pharaoh of Egypt it was I think Ptolemy II, but you don't want to quote me on that-

/   Too late!

☐   Who wanted to commission a translation of the Old Testament for the Jewish communities over living in Egypt at the time. So really quite nice, and so what he did I think there were six or seven tribes and he took twelve Scholars from all the different tribes and put them all in different rooms. And he asked them to translate the Old Testament and you can maybe guess what happened in why this is called Legend: They all came up with the exact same translation. Wow! Because of course the words of the original were so "transparent".

I suppose or unambiguous that of course, they all came up with the exact same translation, which is kind of laughable because you can experience of translations it's all been very basic, you know that this is not, this is not going to happen and it's just a strategy to give more strength to the original and also to the translation and to make the translation appear like it's something that is really well, authoritative. Okay, all like it has the same author as the, as the original. And you find that kind of issues a lot. They still crop up in kind of... on certain ways with, with religious texts in particular because of the, the need for you know. This kind of transparency, that kind of meaning their needs, it has to be unambiguous. Otherwise, we have a problem. What do we do if it's fuzzy? What do we follow? It can't be opaque. There has to be one single meaning to the point that when you translate certain religious texts and you look at the translation, they don't say that there are translations of the Koran for instance, but it would say that it's a translation of the words of as a kind of disclaimer almost saying: 'Look we're just, we're just giving you the words you do whatever you want with them we're kind of not taking responsibility here.'

/ I'm interested to, when I talked about something about like, you know hyper-visibility being opaque, something is opaque, you mentioned cinema, and I've been thinking about the photographic as well and these particular ideas of, sort of people going into one room and translating something that comes out the same. The idea that the photograph example is this long-standing idea that this slice of reality that it's not, it's transparent reality and yet if you were to give fifty people this the same camera and ask them to photograph the same object in the middle of the table you would have fifty different photographs. So, I was I wondering if you could say a little bit more about that; what you meant when you're talking about the idea of cinema and that kind of that dynamic there because, huh, I'm just interested in what you got to say about it-

✱ Well, I don't know if I can really elaborate in that, I was just reacting.

/ Okay.

✱ It's because, yeah, if you just have a light flux without something to stop it, then you don't see anything. So, you need the screen. You need an opacity to be able to see something in fact, and that's why I was saying, I was taking your quote which was "opacify the mediations".

/ Yeah.

✱ I think for the next tables, we should have all the people involved in the project, even if they remain silent; I mean, Angelica and Sam could, could be here sitting on a chair and listening and all the other people involved. There would, the project would still be opaque, but then we would see the mediations. It's like when the interpretation, or the translation you were talking about, that the translator or interpreter is not supposed to be, to manifest his presence or her presence. It's, for instance, when, in the trial, a witness is laughing or is crying, it is considered

very inappropriate that the translator starts to laugh or to cry. So, they just keep one feature of the discursive object. They don't keep everything. They just keep the semantic, let's say, but when the, they interrupt the chain of translation, saying: 'There is a problem because the witness said this and that, and it could have two meanings.' It is both considered as a problem because the Interpreter should not be interfering, but at the same time, it's a way to enrich the conversation, and I would say, more to enrich, to save the trial, because if they go, if they choose the wrong meaning then it can be a problem. So, it's, the opacification, opacifying of the mediations is really, really important in fact, for the sustainability of the project. The more mediations, the more opaque are made the mediations, the most sustainable, in fact, is the project, because it can, it can last longer because you can, you can sustain, you can fix the mediations if there are problems somewhere. If you let them invisible, if somewhere it is collapsing, you won't know where. So opacifying the mediations is really a key point, I think.

☐   I think I agree with that. It seems to be going against the way that society, western society, operates at the moment where processes and mediations or were always trying to explain them and to fix them to provide the kind of legal framework for them in order to, ah... It seems like we're doing that for, to gain some protection as well. Like if you read if you don't follow the letter of the law, then you put yourself in trouble and then it's your fault. So, it's a way of attributing responsibility as well. Whereas if the mediation is opaque, then you can't do that. It's just opaque and then we need to fix the situation rather than you know point the finger and say; well someone You know; you'd made a mistake here. It's their fault. So, it seems that opacity here is a way of, you know, maybe not falling into this kind of pitfalls.

/   I mean, that also strikes me in a sense. They're about this idea of kind of codification of in terms of law structures to kind of codify things, It can therefore be referred to in terms of that rather than, that fits with a kind of, I mean I mentioned at the beginning, Edward Glissant, his idea of opacity and as not being this, this kind of invisibility, but this kind of condition of the impossibility of total knowability. And actually as a... as a kind of political or, yeah, the political project of the enlightenment imperial project to colonialism, to try and render everything knowable and accessible is also a process of kind of codification of knowledge as well and, and of structuring things by categorisation, which goes against what Glissant would argue is the very inherent kind of, I hesitate to use the word nature, I think more relational condition is what he was having with thinking, that actually that is at the core. And so, what you're saying there is that the, and that's you see this more and more and more. Things trying to be rendered completely transparent and codified and I think about this in terms of the body and biometrics is a really interesting one, but actually written into these biometric Technologies are also conditioned of racism and sexism which I was reading about really, in a really interesting way that there's a video on YouTube of facial recognition software and there's a guy in a store, African-American guy, and he's kind of like look at this movement has had around like this and he says: I'm just going to bring in my colleague Wendy, my white colleague Wendy. Wendy comes in and the camera starts moving following her face.

And so, the camera that the algorithms can't see black skin. So, this is kind of, this, I don't know, that in this process towards this kind of total transparency through in the body, we often forget that this kind of signatures of that kind of Imperial project, that violence and codification are written into them. And now I find that-

✻　I want to reassure you, I'm sure that the surveillance camera will be soon able to monitore black faces.

╱　Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

◯　Recalibrate differently.

✻　Yeah, Yeah, they will manage.

╱　Of course! But it's something that doesn't, I think, yeah, that doesn't often-

✻　Yeah. It's, it's, to go in your current, that opacity can, can be a tool for let's say social fights or social struggle, resistance, I have a little story that, I don't know if you know this artist called Agency, "Agence", he is based in Bruxelles, who works on, in a nutshell, works on the split between nature and culture, through law, and he was pointing a case where there is a tribe in Australia, an Aboriginal tribe, who was studied by an English, British anthropologist. let's say, I would say in the 30's 40's, and he asked to have access to their secret cave because, in their secret cave, there was a mapping of the whole area where the water sources were. And the access of this cave was also regulated inside the group because you could not have access to it before you would turn 40 years old. So it was both important not only for the tribe in regard to the other tribes — because if the other tribes had access to this map, they could poison the sources or they could control the sources and, if there was a war, it could be a weakness for this tribe, to not to be in control of the water supply anymore. And it was also important inside the group because it would make the difference between people under 40 and beyond 40 years old, in terms of hierarchy and political positions. So, the anthropologist asked to have access to it and the tribe said: 'okay, but you have to swear not to publish the map! we can show it to you, we can explain you how it works, but promise you won't publish it.' "'ure. Sure. I won't, I won't publish it.' So, he studied it and he came back to England, he did a career and when he was about retiring, he said: 'Ah, that field study I did, like 40 years ago, that was really the peak, in fact, of my research. I should do something about that.' And he published a book, and on the first page of the book... was the map. So, what the aboriginal tribe did was to sue the anthropologist, but a tribe cannot sue, because the tribe is not a legal person. So, they decided they would turn into a legal person as the author of the map, as an artist, and they said: 'We are the author of the map and we own the copyright. So, by publishing it without our consent, it's an infringement of copyright.' And by this technique, which means by setting up a public legal point with, let's say, a legal innovation because it was the first time a collective would turn into a persona, into a legal actor, as an author or as an artist, they were able to force the anthropologist to take out the publication of the book, at least in Australia.

He was allowed to keep the book published in Great Britain. But at least in Australia, the youngsters had to go through Amazon to order it, which was possible but not obvious. So, it was a way to protect, in fact, the tribe by this over visibility, by rein-stating an opacity, but by making a public legal point. So, the publicity, once again, doesn't go against the opacity, they go, they go together and it's the transparency which endangers the tribe. They have to, to make that point public to be protected. To preserve the opacity.

/   For sure...yeah, I mean, and I think, and I'm coming back to Glissant again be-cause, I mean, this is kind of the structure of my sort of understanding of this idea of opacity. And for him the idea of... You mentioned resistance and I'm thinking about you know, something like obscuring or obfuscation as a kind of like a resis-tant technique that would render something opaque; particularly with information, technology and things like that, but for Glissant I think opacity is something that you try and generate or it's something that already, is already there that you have to, we have to claim a right "the right back to", that actually power in its particular kind of Western colonial imperial form has, its war is on this condition of relation-ality. And it strikes me that a lot of the examples that we've been speaking about particularly this idea of sort of levels of visibility within groups within open source Jihad, you know, that, that speaks that, that sense of opacity as the core of the kind of relational condition of being humans, and a social networks and I think that's quite something that strikes as important. It's not something that we kind of claim, is a mask that we put on. is the fact that power tries to remove the mask in a way that is already inherent in those relations. And I think even though it's like quite a subtle shift, I think that's quite an important point. When we think about, yeah, the kind of... a sort of violence of transparency.

☐   I think it doesn't always do that successfully though. The one example I'm thinking about is the US census, for instance, where you have, to you have to check your race or ethnicity, you know, and you have to fall within certain categories and these categories change with every census because they're never actually ade-quate, you know because they always fail to account for this kind of in-between spaces, you know, because we're all dealing with a continuum and what it seems to be trying to do is purely for descriptive purposes, you know, we're trying to de-scribe the US population, so it falls, it falls under this broad headings. And as soon as you do that you are trying to pick up, I think, on the salient properties and you all see sending a message: 'look! these are the properties that are important then you're faced with the response', you know, where the people agree: 'Yes, I identify as this or that.' Or people say: 'Well, I don't identify as either this or that, I identify as something else.' And, and by fixating these names by having, you know, these, these labels you also create the possibility for difference. Okay, it's only through this process of classification that difference can be, can also be possible.

◯   Yeah, I mean I would kind of-

✱   And what, what's the point of, which leads to? You are saying this because?   **18**

☐   I was just about to-

✱   You were saying "it's not always the time, but it's not always..." reacting to-

☐   Reacting to what you were saying about... I can't remember!

✱   Not, because-

☐   I just follow the flow of my ideas.

✱   I don't see in which sense it contradicts or it opposes. I think or I have the feeling it's exactly the same.

☐   Yes, yes.

✱   Of what you're saying. I mean you were saying it's not all the time the case?

☐   No, you, by creating these labels, you're creating the possibility for difference. I mean, in doing so you are... you're trying to implement some kind of transparency, but your kind of always failing because it's the implementation of that transparency that invites, actually. Is opacity that invites the exploration of those in-between spaces.

✱   But why do you say that transparency is not more like glasses, like perspective. Because you said yourself that it was changing every census.

☐   Yes, I think I see this fixation. You know you're trying to capture some kind of reality. We are always failing to do that.

✱   Yes, and it's because these categories will produce data and by compiling these data it will determine politics, policies. and funding for instance for minorities, etc. etc. But as you said, every census, it changes and because it's, these categories are the result of civil struggles, or social struggles. For example, in Brazil, before there had just "Caucasian", "Black" and "Indian". And at some point, they asked people: 'Okay, how would you describe yourself?' and they got to more than thirty answers or fifty answers, you had such subtle differences like: 'I'm 1/8 black and 1/4 Indian and one...'. So, this is it. I ended up to have sixsteen categories. And, I think it was last year or two years ago, the government said: 'Okay, sixteen is too much. So, we're going to reduce it to four.' And people started to protest because they considered that these sixteen boxes were, in fact, civil rights, and it was a recognition of their identity. But, but it's a way, as you said to, to, to make some issues salient, to make them visible but it's, I don't see it as an opposite, it doesn't make them transparent. It makes them quite the opposite. Let's say more "temporary stable".

☐   I think it's trying to make the, to give them some form of transparency, but I also think it's always failing because whenever you're describing you have to kind

of identify what's important about something if you describe, you know, this class you are going to try and talk about his size about its transparency and so on and so forth. So, you have to work kind of contours and build-

✱   So, by "transparency" to you mean neutralised? by transparent?

◻   In what context?

✱   In the context of the census. By transparent you're saying that they'll try to, to be seen as natural categories which exist in the world and not as a social construct?

◻   Yes, which is why you end up with also the kind of discussions that you've got in the US on race and ethnicity. And why, you know, it's such it's a shifting ground and why race and ethnicity or... haven't gotten a satisfactory definition.

✱   Yeah, but that's kind of why they cannot be considered as transparent because you cannot disconnect them to the debates and controversies, you're talking about that.

◻   That's right! I think I'm talking from the perspective of the descriptor. The state, the institution. The US government is trying to kind of applying some kind of template: look this is the American population, take a box.

✱   But yeah, but at the same time, I don't know exactly who decide on the categories. If they are sociologists or universities or I don't know exactly.

◯   I'm not entirely sure, no.

✱   So, who is the board? That would be interesting-

◯   Who comes up with the labels. Yeah.

✱   What's the process to decide the categories. But I'm not sure they are naïve. I think there are very much aware of the other fights behind. Yeah, so-

／   But, I mean, those categories produce subjects, which can then be politically economically manipulated and, you know, you said something that interest just me because I have a different take a different perspective you're talking about the idea of codification or this kind of notion of categories delineating something makes difference possible? I come from reflecting that actually difference precedes identity. So the difference is a state of pure difference and then the process of identification of categories producers an identity, It's not that I don't, you have to have an identity to then have different difference exists and from that difference, categories are produced and that's, that's a kind of old alerts that spoke about this in the 1960s with-

⬤   Most Foucault, especially in The History of Sexuality, drives towards that point, that there's a shift between just noticing behaviours, and categorizing identities. So, he talks about the shift between trying people for sodomy which is just a sexual act. So, there is the sodomite: people who have engaged in sodomy as an act and then around about the time of the Oscar Wilde trials in the late 19th century, there's been enough attention paid to and thinking about acts like sodomy, cross-dressing, etc. for people to start kind of formulating categories of people who do these things. So you move from doing to being and then identities come out of that and categorisation, and then like you said earlier, they'll be a category the others often, for example gender and sexuality was often imposed by the medical establishment and people say, well you are a homosexual or you are a transvestite or whatever and then people think: that doesn't describe me actually and so then work on forming, you know, new categories of identity that they feel better suit them as, as beings and I think the key shift is a move from the imposition of identities on to people, to people being allowed to determine them for themselves and shifting their relationships with institutions. You know? Institutions will collect data.

❭   Hello. I got lunch for you!

⬤   Great. Are we up for a break for lunch? I think I am.

Yeah do we record ourselves eating? Thank you.

▢   Thank you. Can you really separate clearly to a mechanism? You say that difference pre-exists, but then, how do you know if it's there if you don't have the keys language too kind of, articulate it?

/   But this is also articulated-

▢   This is also a... or as soon as you articulated does it becomes-

/   Yeah, potentially. I mean I think language fixes as well. And I think the idea of difference that I have in my head and I also this idea of opacity as well is nothing that is, you know, a continuum influx, you know, it doesn't stay still, is something like identity, Frans Fernands talks about identity, or talked about identity as being dead! You know, identities are dead. Because they're fixed and therefore, they don't, they no longer allow for the inherent kind of flux, the continuum that we've been talking about and a lot of categorisation and identity production does that. It fixes something in the mall, which then essentially kills it. It kills its life. And I think yeah, that's, that's how I kind of conceptualise it; that I see were talking about this kind of, is difficult to give it a kind of visual metaphor. Just what I kind of want to do with this sort of active substrate that kind of is then collected and produced into things, entities that don't have an identity. So rather than starting with this idea that things have a kind of essential identity, which then generates a difference amongst things: difference is what generates identity through the process of subject formation. And I think that's...

I think they are a really important philosophical-conceptual point that because it makes us think about things in a slightly different way-

O They form a dialectical relationship, but yes, what is the start point. Sorry, I-

/ No, no, no it's alright, I was about finished. Yeah, I think it's important because it stops, stops us thinking about you know, the kind of idea of what a central subject of being a subject and make us think about processes of subjectivization: How are we produced a subject? And that's when you link things to the stories around politics and culture when you can disconnect from all of those stories that it's inherently related to. It's very easy to portion things off into kind of autonomous categories freethinkers-identity of starting things because we think about things are self-identical contained units, rather than fundamentally in assemblages and connected interrelated in a kind of social and material way that then these categories by language by politics by culture by a source are produced by power, and that's, Yeah, that's definitely-

* But also, without categories, you cannot speak-

/ Yeah, so there's a tension-

* You need them. Otherwise, you remain in this substrate.

/ Yeah, absolutely-

* Undifferentiated substrate.

/ Absolutely, which is why there's a real tension at the heart of it, because... But I think recognising it and being able to speak about it allows us to go to think that about how to incorporate into the way that we deal with and we talk about things and we act and you know, the kind of ethics: How might we live? you incorporate the process of production into it wich is important-

* Yeah, but it doesn't belong only to the power. Look at the political fights all around the world of minorities. They don't they, don't say we want to stay in in-differentiated substrate; they fight for recognition, which means for categories. So it's just that which statues you give to these categories: are they fixed and permanent or are they temporary and contextual?

/ I couldn't agree more. I think it's important. I think is that there's a real tension at the heart of kind of like a politics that seeks for kind of recognition and assimilation and legislation by a certain power structure. But actually, those categories are also what you get used to oppress at the same time. It's a really big debate at the heart of queer politics for example about the idea of a kind of anti-essential approach that undoes identity categories and one in a more kind of traditional LGBT politics perhaps that seeks that kind of recognition in the state and it is a tension

because actually you kind of need both. And I think it's a, yeah, they're definitely in tension at the heart of it for sure. But yeah.

☐   This makes me think about the whole debate on the *écriture inclusive*, in France, I don't know if you have heard about the inclusive writing is called.

○   Oh! Yes, yes.

☐   Well, some people trying to come up with, not rules. It's more like a way of spelling, so it only applies to writing and make the two genders in French, because in French there are two genders: the masculine and the feminine. There isn't a neutral research like in German, for instance, to make them visible on paper when you're writing. Can I give you an example?

/   Yeah, I'd like that.

✱   But it's more like in English when you want to use a pronoun for a profession, for instance, we were talking about the interpreter. And when you want to reuse without repeating, you would say in English "he" and if you don't know the gender, but you could say also "she" or you could say "they". So that's more or less the issue of the inclusive. Do you make gender visible or not?

☐   I think it's slightly different here because you make both genders visible like "everybody went to the cinema", "tous le personnes sont allés" and then you need an agreement at the end here, and so you added a little dot and then an "e" which is, which normally indicates the feminine form and then the next another dot and then the "s" which indicates that it's plural. So, you kind of make the feminine gender stand out more, you give it more visibility.

/   Since this, because, like, when in kind of collective, so if there are a hundred people in a room and ninety nine are female and one is male in French the plural is always masculinized right? So, it's about, it's about undoing that basically that it privileges the masculine and yet in the plural that's, that's okay. Okay, so there's a way of actually in writing and trying to show that this is you know, across gender rather than masculinize, okay? Cool.

☐   But is it really cross-gender or is it masculine and feminine?

/   Yeah, I was gonna say, then you've got the question of kind of, you know, "binarization" as well-

☐   Because you'll... the whole process kind of fits the one against the other in a way. You know, you're using, your, it's called inclusive because while you're including both because that's what you've got, that the resources that you've got. But the language provides, but at the same time it's kind of, yeah, in doing so, but because also of the kind of discussions that it's generating at the moment the Académie

Française, a group of old people that said that we completely reject this kind of writing that is going to be the death of the French language something like that-

/ We've been speaking about that the last five hundred years. But it's strange, isn't it? Because it, you know, when you, when you talk about like, inclusiveness by its very kind of nature, you sort of, generate an exclusion at the same time, which is why actually the pronoun "they" in English is actually really useful because it actually doesn't, it accommodates everything, right? And which I think is, when you've got a binarize gender structure in French is, yeah, like say the tools at hand make it very difficult to do, unless you create an entirely new category and structure, but that's actually quite difficult.

I think I've never been recorded eating my lunch before.

O Where I'm placing to the microphone, we also eating the loudest food, so-

/ Back in a minute.

□ Ultimately is whether people use it or not that will decide whether inclusive writing gets picked up, you know, the Académie Française can say whatever they want.

✶ But the Académie Française doesn't prescribe anything. They just record the use. They, they don't produce norms.

□ But they, of course, they don't produce norms, because in a way, you know, no one can sort of have a norm imposed on us? But do the norm is imposed by speakers. People's uses of the language, but at the same time they've got quite an, ah, powerful voice and they're quite far-reaching, well, in some circles I suppose-

✶ Like, who? Which are those?

□ Conservative circles?

✶ It's very general.

□ Well, yes, but I... when you look at the kind of debate happening at the moment, there is really a debate. You know, there is a sort of, there are whole groups of the population who completely reject these this idea and you know, bring the argument about the purity of the language. All the old argument that you bring up every time someone is trying to change something about the French language. You know, it's sacred! You know, you can't, you can't touch, you can't do that to the language and what does it mean for teaching and then we're going to have to change all the keyboards to add an extra key. So, I don't know whether they influence the conservatives, or whether they're saying the same thing the conservatives do, but there is certainly some, you know, now supporting each other, let's say.

If you want to be really silly about it, you could say that the feminine form is always at the end of the words. So, it always comes second. So, the masculine always comes first, you know, and, and you can start the whole debate over again.

✱   And what about the professions which are in the feminine form that are occupied by "they" so "une éminence". So, should you turn it masculine? "Un éminent"? How do you deal with that?

☐   How did they do it in Canada? They always do it differently there, always need all these kinds of things completely differently from the French.

✱   Yeah, I don't know. You're right, should have a look to them.

/   There is something... I really like that the sense of, you know, you can try to impose their norms and changes, but like you are saying, whether it gets adopted or not, and language is kind of an ever-evolving thing, is pretty amazing. I was having a conversation a few years ago, and I don't know a great deal about, but I remember hearing it, like the whole like, you know, like the French language is about to, you know, die because of all of these imports of English words into it. And of course, it hasn't! And went back to Paris recently and it was actually amazing to hear how many kinds of like anglicize words of slang as well, like, you know *shootè*, or things like this, and it's like an evolution of language that I've seen in my, you know, my lifetime which is quite fascinating. I also got really fascinated with like *verlan* when I was living in Paris as well this kind of like resistant language-

✱   There was a big moment for *verlan* when you were there.

/   Yeah, Yeah! It was; like, the end of the 90's early 2000's. With hip hop culture, and it was, it was quite amazing to like (mimic French) and I was like, god I'm in Paris. I'm trying to learn French, but I'm also having to learn this entirely other language as well! Because of certain friends of mine that are knocked about what they just, I just like: 'That doesn't even sound like French what's going on?' I'm learning two languages! and I really like that kind of, that sort of kind of continuous hybridity of, of spoken language and eventually ends up in the written in textual forms as well written forms and so I see, nothing, that's one of the reasons why I really really enjoyed languages as a thing. It's very much in kind of-

✱   Yeah, it's a living organism.

/   Yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely.

☐   We had a law that was passed in the early 90s, named after the minister of culture at the time, the *Loi Toubon*, to try and impose the use of French language in certain French songs at certain times on the radio and advertising as well. And they had to change it a few times because it just wasn't working and you... I remember a McDonald's ad which was about a burger like it, buy a burger get

one free or something like that. So, of course, you can't use the word "burger" so you could use it, but if you did then you had to translate it and the bottom and the translation was sandwich! That was okay.

/   Steak, actually.

◻   Yeah. But sandwich had been In the French language long enough and it was alright! We know this one It's okay. But "burger" no, is pushing it really and It's really American. So, we don't want to-

✱   And it's like when Bush Junior was criticizing France while saying about the economy because we were a socialist country he was saying: "You know, the problem in France? They don't have a word like *entrepreneur*!"

○   One of my favourite Bushisms of all time, is just magnificent.

◻   And the interesting evolution with regards to the inclusive writing is that before the internet there weren't really any public spaces where French was written to communicate in a kind of day-to-day environment. Now on the internet, with social media, in particular, you use with in French all the time. So, this is why it might actually... you know, this is something that might actually, yes, it might take hold where I was 20 years ago sadly almost couldn't have, unless it was supported by institutions.

/   And particularly, yeah, the kind of, the institution and knowledge production in France I said, well maybe not so much anymore, but definitely kind of so connected with the state as well. Everything is so quite centralised and there is like a real sense of the sort of centralised control, isn't it? And still... yeah. That's interesting, the one thing I've noticed with French friends of mine on Facebook and social media is that I, like, abbreviations and shortened assigning. I just can't, it takes me a while to actually read I, some of, you know chatting in French that I should be able to like not have forgotten, but I'm like: This is all part, I don't, how do I read it? Because they work in different ways in different languages. Don't do? These kinds of abbreviations.

○   But that's not what you're taught in language courses, presumably.

/   No, no definitely not.

○   So, you get to a more kind of classical French or German. Slang is something that you only pick up when you're really immersed on the language and the culture.

/   For sure. And when I was there it was kind of like the early internet days as well. So, I mean, I think I sent my first email from a caffe in Paris.

✱   Oh really? That's very chic.

/ Yeah like, you know, Facebook kind of like, really wasn't something that-

☐ And you mentioned the verlan and verlan is, was originally completely spoken, exclusively spoken and now it's finding its way into subtitles. I've mentioned verlan in my book on the subtitling of African-American English, because a few different people, different translators, have used verlan to translate African-American English. Which means that there has to have been a process of codification as well because these words are not written.

/ Yeah, absolutely. Wow.

Do people want coffee?

○ I wouldn't mind a cup of tea.

Yeah, the budget is happening at the moment and normally, is not something I'm interested in. But this is a genuine question with the budget now on like how far the government are going to roll back austerity policies. So, it's more interesting than usual.

☐ In the context of Brexit?

○ Well, if not really more in the context of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party to change the nature of political discourse and finally produce a substantive opposition to this sort of economic policy. The government spent a year and a half, two years just laughing at us, something that all right because they have to take this quite seriously now, and Brexit as well obviously, but yeah more, more a sort of threat to the whole sort of neoliberal order, which I think is very interesting. It's kind of interesting seeing the basically-

/ What kind of tea you take?

○ Just English breakfast, please! They've completely painted themselves into a corner because they can't really substantively move away from austerity without admitting that you they've made mistakes and that the seven years of abject misery they've inflicted on the British people just weren't really necessary.

☐ Do you think they're going to back down?

○ They can't really an awful lot. I mean it's almost comical looking at how narrow the limits are for what they can do. I mean, for example within response to the disaster that has been rail privatization - for example, it's just really hard to book a ticket in this country. Really, really difficult to you know, book one that's is sort of reasonably priced, most people just want to buy one ticket that you can use them on the train. Corbyn's Labour has promised complete re-nationalization and the Tories come up with like a millennial railcard, which lets you get a third off fares,

off-peak only, until you turn thirty. But the point is that even with a third off the fares, they're not affordable. That's the issue.

☐   It seems to be so completely random. I've never really actually understood how it works-

⚪   Someone was just saying on Twitter like as an annual season ticket from Horsham to London Victoria, for it isn't very far, is like £3200 a year. In Germany for £4000 a year you can buy a season ticket for the entire national rail network, which is just unbelievable. It really is scandalous. So yeah, just kind of looking at some of the stuff around that really and I like following this stuff on Twitter because it's also very funny. But it's an interesting issue with regards to what we're saying at the start of this conversation about opacity is that, and political organization is the way that Twitter, in particular, has made all of these arguments very, very out in the open. I'm going to see my everyone is using Twitter and you know; those are pretty much everyone sort of media or political sort of circles is-

☐   That it's whatever Trends.

⚪   Yeah, but I mean, you know, arguments, they're out there in public and the sensibility of code annunciation and disowning and things and I think you know, the internet and social media is very good for getting communities together and not particularly good at keeping them together? That's my broad feeling on them. That's generally been have seen this stuff play out. A lot of these arguments just, you know, in the olden days, on the kind of radical left? You'd have a beef with somebody, you'd sit on it for a year. You have it out at the Anarchist Book Fair, and then you go for a pint after whereas now, it's gonna be: oh, I hate you so much, you said this three years ago and you're awful and I loathe you and I can't be in the same room with you and all of this is just terrible. But yeah, the government is making some fairly weak pronouncements on the housing crisis and Philip Hammond is saying he's going to try hard to end rough sleeping by 2022 but it's doubled since 2010. So, what we will be doing is getting it back to where it was when he came in.

☐   And the opacity surrounding Brexit is interesting as well. Finding the British government won't release their reports.

⚪   Yeah.

☐   The EU have.

⚪   Yeah, absolutely.

☐   For very interesting reasons.

⚪   For a lot of pressure on them to release their reports and they just won't do it.   **28**

☐   No, because it would compromise the position for Brexit. So, they invite you to think that and I think that good-

○   And I think in this case it's not so much because there's information that they really need to protect for security reasons, is because there's nothing there and they just don't know what they're doing. I mean the issue around that after the referendum kind of last summer when... you know, when they leave people will say: Okay, what's going to happen to the Northern Irish border then and you know, this response of the Leave team was just: oh, shit we forgot about that. And I suspect that that yeah, this would be quite similar.

☐   The EU report on the Northern Ireland situation is interesting and they are... they explained that the Northern Ireland government Act doesn't actually have any power and will actually have to wait until after Brexit to have any kind of voice-

○   And of course, the Northern Irish government isn't in a state to do anything at the moment anyway. Power-sharing has collapsed. And yeah, it's just, it's staggering as a crisis of legitimacy really-

☐   That it's kind of an issue for, yeah, London really. To deal with.

○   Yeah. Absolutely, which shows little sign of what they are doing.

☐   It doesn't really look like it's making any progress of all these talks that they're having, you know, everything here was-

○   It's going nowhere.

☐   At least is what "Barney" says. David Davis is always more, positive, but it's difficult to take him seriously.

○   I mean, the tactic here, I think, is probably just to bore the public into no longer caring about it. I can't see any other methodology at work saying-

☐   What's interesting in the EU reports as well is that they take for granted that UK, the UK leaving the EU is not economically motivated. You know, that it's purely ideological-

○   Yeah largely racist.

☐   But they seem to have a, yeah, completely accepted the idea that using any economic called, economic-based arguments in this debate on Brexit, yeah, we're just going to fall in a deaf ear.

○   Well and it's partly because the Tories and Labour for the last 15 years like, politics is purely about the economy and it's not about culture and it's not really-

☐   That seems to be the way at least in Western Europe-

◯   But yeah, that's kind of what neoliberalism is here for. There's a very good article by James Meek in the London Review of Books possibly last year or maybe early this year, but opened up with exactly that point about the separation of economics and culture and how it fed into the Brexit vote. And he was talking specifically about, the example used was I think it's called Summerdaleor which was the Cadbury's chocolate plant in the West Country, I think, so between a part of Bristol and set up by Victorian Quakers basically and the idea behind it was, not just that you would have a job, but a whole way of life attached to it, you know, there's subsidised housing for the workers to live in. There's gyms, a swimming pool and sports facilities and sports team attached to it and all these things, a sense of community around it, this idea that these jobs would have been handed down from generation to generation to generation. And then I think Kraft bought Cadbury and then just moved the plant wholesale to Poland and maybe the people who worked at the plants could find other jobs, sure, but they wouldn't find kind of long-term jobs that would have all these benefits with them and this whole way of life associated with them. And nearly everybody who worked at this plant and lost their job voted "leave" and I don't blame them. Yes, well worth looking up. It's a really interesting piece and it's quite long but like James Meek's such a good writer, it's worth it. It's quite eye-opening. And he also wrote a really good book, where is just compilation of other LRB articles called Private Island, and it's just all about there, just various catastrophes of privatisation and all of them are staggering and if he ends the book with an article about going to Thanet, which was the seat that Nigel Farage stood in and like nearly won, but didn't quite, and this just being at the upshot of everything being privatised and all kind of industry and facilities and services being taken out of the hands of the people and then why the Take Back Control idea resonated with people. The chapter on the water privatisation is absolutely staggering and he talks about these floods in the south-west 10 years ago in Tewkesbury and Gloucester, which were really serious, and largely result of like deregulating and privatising the water industry. Yeah, definitely worth reading. I mean, it wasn't a natural disaster as was told to us, it was because of our cost-cutting and poor practice. Yeah. He's very good.

/   I've never read their story well but, my mom was a primary school teacher for a long time and public-private financial initiatives, when they came, they were pushed through this by the government-

◯   Such a catastrophe, yeah.

/   And they ended up by, you know, companies subcontractor to other companies and written into the contracts that for example in one school, in order to change a lightbulb, you weren't able just to go to the corner shop and buy a light bulb and put it in because I would be a breach of contract. You had to call out the maintenance subcontractor to come and do it for you which costs three hundred pounds.

◯   And if this sort of thing had happened in Ceausescu's Romania, we would never hear the end of it.

It's like, you know good old free enterprise: the market, what can you do? How do we feel about carrying on this conversation? We are going for like two hours!

/   Yeah, Are we?

*   Is it good enough?

/   I don't know! I feel like I'm in this position right with this brackets chair and ventriloquising the institutional-

O   I feel like I'm running off of things to say.

/   But I, Yeah, I know not more than, I mean, than you. Kind of very, the quick conversation I have, I'm very mind glad I have had no communication with Lara at all, was that you know, the time frame is completely totally open and we could speak for as long or as little as we felt fit to do? Or interested in? So, yeah.

☐   Do you want to talk about some of these words?

/   We could do. Couldn't we?

Does anyone have a burning desire to speak about something?

*   My train is at five so, I'm good-

/   I'm happy to continue for sure. I suppose this is my kind of job to try to push this in a certain-

*   Is that your job?

/   Apparently so, yeah.

Lets share!

O   Lets share, yeah!

/   I suppose, yeah, maybe did? Was there a specific word that you picked up and you're interested in talking about?

☐   So, I was already trying to relate them to my field because it's what I'm most comfortable with and sometimes it was relatively straightforward. Sometimes it was a little bit more difficult. We talked a little bit about translation earlier and as a translator you're a little bit in the dark into the translation process. I suppose is a little bit opaque: first, we don't really know what happens in the translation process. We know we have an original we know we have a translation but everything that happens in the middle is kind of a little bit "it happens", but what exactly happens is very difficult to theorize.

Is difficult to actually, you know, crystallize it in words and when you're a translator, you also very often not working with the author right there. Sometimes you do and when you do that, you often consider yourself fortunate to be good to work with the author and ask questions and you're working without a reader as well so, you have a kind of intended reader you have a set of assumptions, you know, depending on how the book is going to be marketed through the publisher and all sorts of things. So, you're working with a lot of absentees, I suppose. I know you... I read a book, not so long ago, it was published in 2009 by French author. I think it's been translated into Italian, which is interesting, but I don't think it's been translated in English and the title is, in English it translates as *Translators Revenge.*

✸   Who is the author?

◻   Brice Matthieussent. He is a translator himself and that's his first novel. He has translated lot of American authors in particular and if you look at the back cover of the book it says that the book is a translation. And it's not! Because the original doesn't exist. And then you open the book and you start reading the book and the translation of the text isn't there. So, all you get is just a blank page with a little star and then a black line and the translators note and all you get is the translators notes. So, it's trying to pass as a translation of an original so the original doesn't exist, the translation doesn't exist. And then you get the translators notes. In the first note the translator, in fact, you know, turns out narrator, introduces himself and says: 'Okay, So, I live here I live in do this black line. This is my lair. I don't meddle with my upstairs neighbour, you know, he's got the luxury apartment and I live in my cave', and gradually you start accessing the thoughts of this translator and says; I really don't like the style of the author. So I've deleted all the adjectives: 'Here it goes: this one, this one, this one, this one, that one and I thought I'd delete this whole paragraph as well because I don't like the way it reads', and then show you how he has deleted this paragraph, but it doesn't fit anywhere because you don't have anything else. The truth, the bits that were deleted you start gaining access into the kind of story that is supposed to be going on. Does that make sense?

╱   Yeah, no, for sure. It's what strikes me-

✸   But that's very true, I would say, for translation, which is slightly different for interpretation in real time. I talked with a lot of interpreters at the ICC, at the criminal court and they were telling me that, in fact, in order to do a good job, they have to not think about what they are interpreting, so they have no idea what they're talking about. They're in the sort of state of trance and they're just like an open, how would you say *robinet*?

◻   Yeah, tap.

✸   Tap! Open tap, they translate in real time, but if you stop them, and if you ask them: 'What are you talking about?' They don't know. And they say: 'If we start thinking about what we are translating, we are lost!'

Because we will lose time, and then the speaker will be like five sentences away. And we won't be able to-

/   So, they really are like a kind of ventriloquist's sort of dummy. They just, yeah, it's not a mediation in terms of an intellectual mediation. It's a bottomless mediation.

✱   It's not analytic at all. And it is the same for the stenotypists who write down, the, how do you call them? The court transcriptions. They don't think, they don't know what they are typing: they type. And they say: 'If we start to think about what we are listening, we get lost.'

☐   Surely you have to have some muscle memory.

✱   Yeah, yeah.

○   It's almost like, I don't know, playing tennis or something isn't it? You get warmed up. And then you get to that point where you are not thinking constantly about what you do, and if you do then you will fall apart.

✱   Yeah, like piano playing. You don't know where your fingers are going. So, I guess it's different, although it could seem very close, translating and interpreting, in fact, it seems to be very different in terms of mechanisms.

☐   Absolutely. Absolutely. With machine translation and translation apps this seems to be bringing the two back together to an extent, you know, if you're using a translation app or if you are using Google translator, I don't know If you've seen the them Google has made this little ear piece that you can wear which is like beeper, right? Universal translator device thing, which probably works in some contexts and with some language pairs at least to an extent?

○   This is interesting, isn't it? When you just get a webpage translated Google and I found myself reading Wikipedia in the foreign languages and just getting it translated and you know wondering when the point will arrive where the automatic translation would be indistinguishable from a human translation, because we're clearly not there yet. Yeah, you know, they're not, they're not good for translations. You can kind of parse the information you want from so they're useful in that respect. But you know, they're not-

☐   Good, so I still have a job.

○   Yes!

☐   They are changing the models into neuro-translation. To tell you exactly what that means, they're in the process of changing the way that we do machine translation. Google in particular.

✱   Yeah, because, before they were using rules from grammar and they were trying to generate language from the rules and now, they are, I think, in a totally different approach. Google's can google to see how people speak and what are the current uses. And by scanning the uses which are, sorry for my English, "in use", they get much better results than starting for the rules generating sentences, because they were not able to get out of the grammar book. While now they are just scanning how people speak.

/   It struck me when you're talking about that kind of translators revengeful because well this kind of, the visibility of the deliberate and conceptual visibility of the translator in this book and the kind of player for inflation, this again, this I'm going to come back to because I think it's something that I think we should really continue with, continued worth of exploring that this idea that by rendering something visible in actual fact, you may be increasing on a sense of opacity because what that actually points to is all of these networks production often go unnoticed. We've talked about the idea of, its similar... I mean when you were talking about the invisibility of the translator, I was thinking about the invisibility of the photographer in something like photojournalism, and recently there was a few years ago, Maybe, there was a case of someone being fired from Washington Post. I can't remember who it was or press network, for photoshopping out an image of a camera in a picture for conflict from Syria. And this was you know, deemed obviously against ethical standards because the picture had been altered but the reason why this image, the image of the camera needed to be removed from the final image was because it actually reminds us that there's a mediation by photographer rather than this kind of transparent, or sense of a transparent window on the world. It struck me the same thing, that once you render things visible you actually increase the kind of signifies of opacity and I think that's quite... I just think that's a really interesting dynamic because often as we kind of started this off, right at the beginning this idea of disassociation with opacity and kind of not seeing or lack of vision or something. I think it's something really important about that to some extent and I wonder if this may be other examples we can try think about.

☐   Again, in the context of translation. This guy was mentioning earlier said that you should as much as possible leave traces to make it clear that what you're writing is in fact a translation and it gives kind of practical ways of doing this, by giving what he calls the "remainer" by using things like archaic forms or under used words in your translation. So, words that are going to call attention to themselves. And as a reader you like: Well, this is unusual-

/   Interesting.

☐   Whereas the overwhelming majority would normally make sure that the translation reads in a kind of very seamless sort of way that it is, you know, really quite transparent so that you know, so that the story can draw you in and Venuti takes the opposite science and said: 'Well actually if you did those little traces, you know, when you create this kind of opacity than the opacity can draw you in in a completely different way.'

Where Venuti is perhaps a little less clear is what do you do with the text that's not transparent to begin with? You know, a text that's really fuzzy where meaning is really deliberately opaque.

O   Yeah translating poetry is interesting point. I mean, translating quite a lot of the French modernist writers who make lot of play with homophones. I think of people like Guillaume Apollinaire or Raymond Roussel and anyone who translates that sort of work is going to have to really be quite open with the reader at what decisions that they've made because you know, you're not just translating content, you're translating form as well.

＊   Do you speak a little bit of French?

O   Only GSCE French.

＊   So, if we all speak French, we would make it more opaque.

O   *Oui, Oui!* That's all I've got really.

／   You know I think that what you explained, you think as well of the reason, I'm thinking about saying about the photography example. I was talking to some students and they mentioned the fact that actually sometimes what we desire is not to have to face that kind of level of opacity, there is something about that kind of illusion of transparency that is desirable and I think poetry perhaps, you know, sometimes if you are reading poetry to have a kind of a framework of explanation next to it for it to become really kind of... I mean, given that kind of supporting cast maybe there is something that's, I don't know, there is something about that poetry about losing myself in this kind of really quite opaque world already.

＊   There was a big debate in the 80's in French poetry field about bilingual editions, bilingual publications. A lot of poets were very much against bilingual publications because they were saying that when you translate a poem you create a new text; you create a new poem. And by bilingual editions, you keep the translation under the power of the original text instead of freeing and allowing it to be, to stand on its own feet.

O   And it raises questions about which languages you present in bilingual editions and which you don't because you're translating from a different alphabet. It's a completely different game. I remember a translation of Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti and one of his most famous poems, I don't even know if it's got a title, but it's something like M'illumino d'immenso, Lara will most certainly know his work. And this was just translated in the bilingual edition as I am filled with light and I remember the reviewer just saying: "What's the point? Why translate that?" But you know, see what's in the Arabic or Russian or something or Greek than that be far more of a necessity to do that, but I found that really interesting this idea that you could sell a translation of Italian poems to somebody who doesn't read Italian, there will

be points where the translation is just not needed, either for meaning or aesthetic purposes. That feels to me like quiet kind of an exception rather than the rule.

☐   It's very often, let's say, in this enchanted world, the world of translation, so many of these decisions are done through, you know, the publisher and what they've done to marketing. It's so hard when you write translation to choose its cover when you are the translator. It happens very very rarely that you are allowed to and if you are allowed to often, you know, after hours of negotiations with-

✱   But not only for the translator, for the author too.

/   Yeah.

☐   For the author as well, yeah you are right!

✱   You never choose their cover, it's a space of the editor. Front cover and-

○   I've chosen the cover for both of my books, but they were both quite small presses.

✱   Yeah, with small presses because you have a direct relationship with the publisher, but as soon as it is a big corporation.

/   Can I make a question in terms of translation industry, Am I right in thinking that something like a more kind of fiction commercial textbook tend to not list the translators name or if it is in small print It's never predominantly there within the kind of paratext and all that kind of stuff but in more in academic publishing because it is perhaps important to know the context etc, the translator is often there on the title page. Is that something that, is that true or? Is something I've noticed but I have no knowledge of whether that's actually the case so.

☐   I have a PhD student who is working on translation reviews and he's going through reviews of translated books in the UK in France and in Germany's find all sorts of really interesting things. As far as fiction that's... I'll go with fiction first because it's probably the one that is the most interesting because of what we've witnessed over time as well. If I can go back to Venuti, you know, and his idea that translators are invisible he actually argues in his book in 1995 that translators are very rarely given any credit and he says it's a very Anglo-American thing to do when it doesn't really give any figures. But actually, what my PhD student is finding is that in translation reviews translators tend to be acknowledged more often than they are in France or in German. I think we are moving more and more towards more acknowledgement of the translator: the names tend to be, they tend to be included. It tends to be there, at least in some ways. If It's not on the cover then maybe on the back cover. If not on the back cover then on the first page inside the book. I don't think it's quite systematic yet. We're going towards that. There was a big campaign called name the translator.

O　Yes, they got in touch with me. I reviewed a book in translation and they were like, this is great but name the translator so, yeah now I try to do so if I write about fiction in translation, which I do quite a lot.

☐　And it's interesting because it gives some visibility, you know, the name of the translator is there but in reviews in particular very often, that's all you get and you get no analysis. So, the actual translation itself as a translation, there's no comment on the act of translation and how the translation whether it's even good or bad. Really simple.

✱　But you have a biography of the translator on the review?

☐　No, not ever. I don't think.

O　There can be you know, if you're reviewing a book and you're not fluent in the original language or you haven't read it, then it's generally quite hard to say if something is a good or bad translation. I mean, I feel it more with poetry. You know, I was reading some Romanian surrealist poetry in translation recently and even though I was not familiar with the work in the original language and we didn't do Romanian at school, I could tell these were bad translations because this poet had quite a high reputation for being really interesting. And then what I had on the page in English just felt quite limping and dull and then I read through the introduction to this text of this poet called Gellu Naum, read the introduction to the Gellu Naum in this English anthology and sure enough, the editor says look, you know, we've got these older translations of Naum's works from the 30s and said he was very dissatisfied with them, but it was only really when I sat down with a Romanian friend who was also fond of this poet and we looked at the works together and she said well, no, you could translate this like this and yeah, this is the bad translation for this reason. There's no word of how to go much beyond that just sort of vague instinct without a native speaker.

☐　You are right and It's just very difficult particularly with more minor languages to find you know, review who's fluent in the original language and in English. It's also very interesting because it fix the question of the status of translation as text and whether they exist independently of the original at all and on what grounds they should be assessed, you know, whether they should be assessed for their intrinsic qualities or whether it should be should be assessed in the context of the relationship with the original. And I don't have an answer to that.

O　I mean to have in that extra layer to the text I translated, where the Name the Translator group got in touch with me it was Tristano by an Italian author, Nanni Balestrini, was published in the 60s. He was very into early computing and basically the book was one of the first examples of using algorithms in creative work and he wrote, I think there's 15 chapters which have 15 or 16 sets of two paragraphs per page and he made an algorithm where within each chapter the sets of paragraphs could appear in any order?

So, there's a hundred and fifty trillion different variations of this book that are theoretically possible. I think first they published a run of four thousand versions in translation. So, you've got a translation of the original text that is quite deliberately different every time it's published. So yeah, I just found it a multi-layerness of that interesting.

/   Is interesting sort of the conflicts of intersection of my research as well around the kind of notion of the author function because obviously the notion of anonymity enters into the English language through literature and like pre-kind of work 1700-1800. Everything was pretty much published anonymously was-

O   Yeah and authored sort of collectively a lot of the time-

/   Yeah, but this is the thing I was thinking about then the idea that that kind of visibility of the translator. We also have this kind of "how do we think about the translator function because". I've done like one translation and it was not done on my own. I mean I was the one that got the credit for it, but it wasn't done in conversation with a friend of mine Tom. I was translating a conference paper that was about Lacanian psychoanalysis. I have a little bit of knowledge about Lacan but no, I know, I'm not a Lacanian or like an expert on Lacan and all this technical language. I had to consult somebody about that. I had a back and forth of the author, with the editor. It was a collective endeavour. And I think one of the criticisms that, you know, you get and this is something obviously as history, the idea of the artist-subject is this kind of like unique transcendental genius ego just been kind of totally destroyed.

□   Were you acknowledged?

/   I don't know, I've never seen a final copy so I don't actually know. It was on *Perversion and Sublimation*. It's quite interesting.

O   That sounds like the sort of thing Lacan would have-

/   I suppose, yeah, we are talking about... thinking about the introduction of a kind of the idea of the translator with into the translated text. They're still kind of problems about how that kind of singularises are kind of the translation, which is not inherently-

O   Parallel problems to singular author.

✱   Or singular artist. For a show when you know that the exhibition manager is doing half of the job by providing the material, building the device.

/   Absolutely. It's exactly what we talked about earlier about the people that aren't here that have produced this set of conditions for us to be here.

✱   In order to allow us to have a floating conversation of two, three, four, five hours. it seems like we are by ourselves, but there are ten people behind, in fact.

/   Absolutely. So, I mean, yeah. I don't know. I mean, I'm thinking about kind of Foucault talked about the idea of he thought that everything for a year should be published anonymously. And then see if you could actually attribute anything to anybody and that was his kind of dream that you know this name was served very specific functions, which is categorization caught, you know, commercialization and actually someone like Forster said that literature tender towards the anonymous and actually maybe there's more case for kind of not naming and these things but actually just maybe this is just text that is produced under kind of a condition of anonymity and we can acknowledge that it's a translation rather than the translator that... I don't know. I don't know you just kind-

✱   Well, at the same time, the name is a data among others. If I go back to this example of the six monochromes by six different painters, if you don't know the names of who did this monochrome, then you're stuck, because the name carries a lot of information, not about the geographical origin, but about the way of working. if you know a little bit about the work of the artist or about the writer, so you can already see in a different way the object. So, I don't know if erasing the name would be a solution instead of adding more, more and more. I will go more on the growing, I think, a bigger population instead of-

☐   Which is the case for academic papers in the sciences, were you've often have like seven or eight authors.

/   I'm thinking about a book that was written ten or so years ago called *Reena Spaulings* by Bernadette Corporation. So, this was an exercise in kind of anonymous, a collection of anonymous writers: 450 different writers that came together to write this this book under the name Bernadette Corporation, which is also a fictional and kind of anonymous in inverted commerce group. And I find this book quite fascinating insofar as it sort of especially thinking about this "how do you go about like the first three pages of the book" become about who these people are but then also who did they speak to in like? I think there's something about the excess that I think is about excess here that is trying to get through-

✱   Yeah, but it is not exactly anonymity because they sign under the fictional name of Bernadette Corporation so the reader can rely on these branding, let's say, it's not like anonymous writing.

⦿   Another interesting example to throw in here: There was a novel published in the early 70s called London Consequences and you know Consequences, that game which was quite popular with the Surrealists, I think called "exquisite corpse" were each author doesn't know what the preceding author has written and writes something that adds to a story and you see what you got at the end of it and with London Consequences It was published to the book but it was sort of edited and collated by Margaret Drabble and B. S. Johnson and was a list of 20 authors who'd written a chapter of the book, but you weren't told which author written each chapter and it was actually a competition.

And if you wrote in and correctly identified all of the authors you won a fairly sub-stantial amount of money, and I don't know if anyone won. But this was obviously playing on the fact that these authors had a recognizable style; I most of them were neo-modernist writers who had this very auteur approach to their texts. I wrote a monograph on one of the authors who contributed to this book and I had a fairly good idea of which chapter was his but I never found out, and I don't know actually if the results of this are online anywhere, but I think that's quite interesting as well, this idea of being kind of anonymous and not anonymous at the same time.

✱　So, you are saying that if you succeed to recognize, you win a fair amount of money. And if you fail, do you get electrocuted or something a little bit?

〇　No, the stakes for failing were fairly low.

✱　So, there is no, let's say, tension about failing?

〇　No, no, I think if a publisher killed people for reading their books incorrectly then yeah, I don't know...

／　I find it interesting thinking about this idea of attribution because it's a whole discipline, academic discipline, called attribution studies, which looks at attrib-uting text to authors that were previously anonymous or pseudonymous. And it's kind of treated as a sort of... so I think there's a guy called Howard Love, I think his name is, that wrote the introduction that you know, we still need the author despite the kind of proclamations with Bart and people like that definitely authored all this sort of stuff. But what's interesting about what I read recently, there's that, there's a somebody called Donald or Donald Foster I think, who is an American attributor that use kind of algorithmic software and gang matches of stylistic realistic keys and things like this to attribute a text of Shakespeare's something that, you know, this is an ongoing discussion about whether Shakespeare wrote sonnets or not, but what interested me about this story was the fact that he also works for the cops. So, he's also, so his an academic that attributes literally track who also deals with ransom notes and traces criminals and I found this kind of-

✱　It's like forensic linguistics.

／　I found this kind of like... this connection is kind of like literally attribution and the police and the state. This is just quite a fascinating thing to think to try and think through and think about like there's this desire to uncover to render transparent its very-

✱　Oh yeah, it's a legal discipline, called forensic linguistics. They're exactly doing what you're saying. They're supposed to be able to attribute an anonymous letter to an author or an audio recording.

／　I mean there's lots of arguments happening now at the moment in terms of kind of whether that the idea of anonymity is but a dream actually, because they

say that 80% percent of a population can be identified by postcode by three pie-ces of information basically, and if you add a mobile phone in it becomes almost the whole population by location data by kind of, and you know, you have no idea, you don't need a name! You don't need any of those really like clear signifying just behavioural patterns or stuff like this. This idea of kind this sort of total rendering transparent of society is very much kind of been, you know, I don't know, it is written into technology, but I don't know. Yeah, I think this is why there's something about this category of opacity that's actually really quite important to think about politi-cally as well, insofar as and I like this idea we thought about is a kind of granular sense, is something about in trying to kind of intervene or interject into this sort of the time rendering smooth of our society. So, it's open for what largely for economic flares to go wherever they want. And I don't know I think that the political question of opacity is an important one and I don't know that kind of attribute in authorship and this connection to the state through forensic writing seem to make that kind of very, you know, that kind of thing quite clear, but also something I think that we with we as human beings have also kind of internalized and we want to know as well. We desire to know things. We desire to uncover to be like kind of... and I don't know how you kind of go about resisting that kind of cleaner sense, you hear something and that for me sort of the instinct is to kind of, as particularly like in academia and institution as well, like the whole thing is about a kind of rendering the object of your study entirely open and transparent for critical, you know, critical intervention or pe-ople to see. So how do we kind of go about what maybe the practices of sort of cla-mouring for this right to opacity that Glissant talked about. I mean that seems to me that it starts really with a kind of acknowledgement that we've internalized this kind of, this process of knowing, of wanting to know and wanting to render everything understandable, which may be impossible but it's a behaviour that I think we all, to certain extent do, yeah, I don't know it just-

I think Glissant on an interview spoke about documentary practice as well. So documentary practice is one of those practice which is, you know, try to disposal its idea of rendering things clear and transparent and he's on spoke to a young artist who is planning to make a documentary about him or more about the expe-riences at this conference and you know, already he was asking the filmmaker to kind of try forget about his instincts to sort of like do the kind of "I want to know" and suggested that just a long shot of the surface of the sea would suffice for this documentary. Like, I don't know what type of ways do we use opacity or try and search or claim opacity is in our practice or in political practice. I don't know. It's just an open thought.

☐   What are the pressures do you think. What is it that makes us behave the way you do? And want to try and attribute authorship?

/   Maybe it's some sort of kind of, are we sort of still? Because I see what you said about the monochromes as well like how five different monochromes con-nected to five different practices. It's actually important because it allows us to think about them in different ways.

But as long as we don't sort of think about those five people that made them these names attach them as this kind of like sort of autonomous kind of subjects like, you know the kind of hero-artist because of course, it's not like that. So yeah, they're definitely data as you say but I don't know I think maybe-

✱ This is only, because the names encapsulate something more, it's just a sticker, just a label for something else. But in fact, you should add much more data for instance. How much time did it take? Because a monochrome could have taken two minutes with a roll brush or six years with a tiny paintbrush. It could have involved twenty people, or one person, or it could have been externalized in China and it could have been made in China or in India. So, you need to add more and more, instead of, in fact, deleting. It's a, but that's true that, for instance, when you say Jeff Koons, you know that it's not one person. It's a corporation behind, so you have a lot of data just by that. It's not enough, of course, because you don't have, I mean, it plays too much on the myth or on the rumour.

/ I do wonder though, if how you know, how in kind of, if you were to imagine someone like Damien Hirst somebody that is who is Damien Hirst Inc. for sure is a corporation. Right? Like if you were to mention that to somebody who wasn't necessarily familiar with the art world, or familiar with art, would that still resonate as this kind of individualized person and I think it probably does for the majority of people. So, how do you go about, I don't know, introducing a kind of opacity into someone like Hirst, that's an interesting question-

✱ We are back into "Open Source Jihad".

/ Yeah, absolutely yeah.

✱ How do you get, how do you learn the vocabulary which means, how do you get, let's say, immersed, or how do you become part of a group? So, it doesn't need to be specifically Jihadi group, it can be an art group. How do you get accustomed to Damian Hirst practice?

/ I mean, there's something, is interesting I was thinking about the artist collective Claire Fontaine and this neon sign was made by, so it's the selection of neon signs that that have the name of the person who was the principal producer and then how much they cost. So, it's a kind of like a play on kind of conceptual-ism, Love of the neon sign, but it's also doing exactly this is opening up and Claire Fontaine is a pseudonym that's been taken from the French stationary company called a ready-made artist. There's kind of a play on Duchamp's ready-made and so there's something happening in that practice is pointing exactly those things that this is a ready-made artist. There's nobody in particular behind this they even so the management is an empty center and incorporated into the work is very much the, you know, the artisan and the economic, you know, remuneration that happened is in there. So, it is this kind of like, it's pointing exactly that isn't it? is sort of you go into a gallery perhaps to be, sometimes I don't know, people going

to a gallery to kind of that illusion of space away from the world whatever you're being confronted by its complicity in it. But also, you can't even point to this kind of like hallowed person behind it because this is empty which says a lot about kind of art production, general culture production I think is something important in that and yeah. There's a certain, there's a kind of opacity to that practice I think it's ironically as when ironically but, you know, from what we've been talking about the bright neon and rendering something easily transparent does the kind of yes, this is this tension, isn't it? Interesting? Interesting. So yeah... how do we cancel an Open Source Jihad on to cultural production then?

✱   It's transparent.

○   I think I'd like to see Damien Hirst work with the Mana Art Project. I'd pay to see that.

/   And also, the other question see we were saying that we want more, we want more, we want more there's something about, but we also spoke at the beginning a little bit about the idea that if you've got that kind of total visibility than things become kind of nonsensical in a way. So, is there a kind of where do we stop?

✱   Well, there is no answer. I mean in this situation which determines, it's the group which considers that's enough. We are, more or less, all in, now in the group and I think it's related to the action. For instance, should we invite the guards to be part of it? Do they play a role or not in this event? Well, maybe not all the guards but the ones who are present today, or the ones who take care of this part of the video.

/   Who cleaned the floor this morning, people who brought dinner, who sanded this down.

○   But there were people talking behind the pan earlier and I found myself thinking should I go and say to them that we're recording? Can you keep it down? Should I stop talking so that they can be picked up properly by the microphone and -I'm alright actually-

✱   The people of the catering, they allowed us to keep working... without rest!

/   And it's also interesting that they appear and leave a trace in the recording. And yet, many other people that were perhaps involved in the production absolutely isn't-

✱   So, there is no pre-existing answer, I mean, where to stop. It's probably one of the relevant questions that should be asked in this kind of project. It's the same question for any investigation: 'Where should you stop to investigate, when and where? When is enough?

/   Yeah for sure.   **43**

○   I found that MH370 stuff incredibly interesting and every six months or so, you'll see a news report saying that they're going to start looking for this plane again, but public bodies will say look, we just don't have the time or the money or the resources to keep looking and I think the latest development is that some private company has offered to look for the plane on a sort of no win, no fee basis. And I'm really intrigued to see whether that finds anything or not. But yeah exactly. I mean that's just been the crucial problem for the investigation is like well this plane is probably in the ocean somewhere. I just stopped because they don't, they don't have a good track on where it went. That's been one of the more kind of fascinating stories of recent times for me really, Just you know, firstly how do you lose an aircraft? And secondly, how do you find it?

✱   Well they just lost a submarine.

○   Yeah. Yeah. That's right. Yeah.

✱   In Argentina.

○   Yeah and there are all these false alarms about-

✱   One of the three biggest submarines in Argentina. They lost it.

/   Just lost? Gone?

○   Yeah.

✱   Last week.

/   Wow, I didn't see that.

✱   It's embarrassing.

/   Yeah, those things are pretty big right?

○   Yeah.

☐   Is not a set of keys is it?

/   Wow...

○   We are going for three hours, I think.

☐   It's not bad...

/   Yeah it is, Its five to three.

✱   Should we have to listen to all of this? If we want to be very nasty, we would ask Angelica and Sam to listen to it too.

/   Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah! All the people that made it possible. Including the person that drove the tram on the way for me to come here.

✱   It should be a public broadcasting.

⭘   Train driver that got me here yesterday.

✱   It could be used as material for future artwork, I guess.

/   From what I understand, and this is having had no direct communication with Lara, just through what Sam said, is that these conversations are designed to be part of Lara's archive and there is a kind of ambition to publish them in some form. The way Sam spoke about it on Monday was as kind of redacted documents as if they were coming from a kind of cold war bunker-

✱   So, we can blacken out some parts. Like in the WikiLeaks?

/   Yeah, I think that's the kind of potentially idea, yeah.

✱   We should blacken out everything!

/   Yeah, well that's what I think!

⭘   It moves back into one of the notes I made near the beginning of this conversation, I remember being very struck by an interview with the like English situation with artist Ralph Rumney where he's talking about, you know, this is even back in the early noughties and only become more true now that almost certainly we live in a world where you know, the vast majority of what we say and do is kind of like recorded and archived and monitored, but who's listening to it all and this feels like a kind of a microcosm of that. We're going to record this kind of, you know, three hour or plus conversations, but there's only one person at the other end is going to be kind of parsing it.

✱   But it would be very different for instance to erase a file right now by pushing a button and to ask somebody to write down and to blacken out later.

/   Yeah, absolutely.

✱   It would be very, I mean, the result would be the same non-access to it, but that would be very different in terms of practices.

/   Absolutely. I mean, that's one of the things that came up in the conversation with Sam, is about the process and I think you mentioned earlier as well about these kind of very deliberate and kind of complex structuring of things that he's

eventual kind of product is opaque or not even that visible or not even, but you know, potentially not there or removed from the situation and you're right that's you know, that's a focus on a process rather than yeah, like you said: 'Just getting rid of it now.' They are very very different things. Yeah.

✱   We could be even more nastier, but we could say that we're gonna just stop talking for a while, but we will come back, and so they have to listen to it extensively.

◯   That's kind of like these old hidden tracks on CDs, isn't it? You know they were there immediately because the last track would be 29 minutes long, the song would finish after four minutes and you think well, there's clearly something else here. So, you would skip it along, so sort of hidden or not hidden.

✱   And if you go too fast-forward, you miss it. We can, we are allowed to have like one second intervention, which is also, of course, very meaningful.

◯   But they presumably, you know, this will be put onto a computer and then play back with some sort of media player where you can just click along the line. And you can just click until you find sound. You know, you can put in some audio transcription or some audio editing process.

✱   But we can trick it, like producing noises.

◯   Yeah, you know, we could leave a recording of some other conversation playing next that microphone.

✱   Or we could record the recorder.

◯   Yeah!

/   Record the recorder...

☐   That's our meta, yeah.

✱   We could be silent but present.

◯   Also like, that feels to me like a good place to stop, I feel like I have nothing else to say.

☐   I'm fine with that.

/   Yeah, knocked ahead, call it a day.

◯   Great! I think three hours is more or less my limit.

/   Yeah, we've come to some good stuff.

You're giving a kind of keyword a set of other words and thrown into a room together. Like yeah, I think hopefully proves to be interesting!

☐ We didn't kill each other maybe we passed.

⭕ Passionate disagreement even.

/ Do we just leave that running there?

☐ Are you going back tonight Franck?

✱ Yes, even maybe earlier in fact. Because I thought I would leave at 5, but it's 3, maybe I can catch an earlier train?

/ Maybe.

✱ And get home earlier. Yesterday I arrived here at 1:30 in the morning so I wouldn't mind to be back at four.

☐ So, you are taking the Eurostar tonight?

✱ Yeah.

☐ Ok. We Will both be in the train with Sam.

✱ But he leaves at three, no?

☐ I thought he said four, but maybe-

⭕ Yes, he did say four, yes.

☐ I guess you are terribly far presumably.

/ No, I've got to go to campus. Complete bits to do there and then, yeah loads of...

✱ So, did, about the preparation of the event, you all knew Sam before?

/ So I, as I said before, I did some, organize some study sessions here, as part of, I've done a research placement, a contemporary frame here that ended in July this year, as part of, that placement I put on five kind of study sessions to our slots with a couple of texts and ideas based around opacity and anonymity kind of hetero limiting passover people like that kind of no access in opacity, that's sort of stuff. And yeah, so that's how I kind of I think I've got involved with a dozen of these so I'm familiar with the institutions and Sam and Angelica.

✱ Do you have any idea how?

☐   I think it wasn't supposed to be me, it was supposed to be someone else to sort of through my name into contention.

✱   Because that person wasn't-

☐   Wasn't available yes.

✱   So, she gave your name?

/   But I just got an email saying that we were having this conversation-

☐   That's quiet literally what I know.

○   I don't know much more than. But yeah, I mean they gave me a few days I couldn't do so they were quite keen to have me in any case.

✱   But you knew them before?

○   Sam I've met once I think that's why I recognize his face. I think he might be friends with another friend of mine in Manchester, but otherwise no.

✱   And I met Sam some years ago when he curated a show in France in a very small-town center between Nancy and Metz about, it was called *Schizophonia* like artists working with sound. But I hadn't heard from him, since that, for years.

/   And apparently this, because I study a few things about the kind of background that I don't know but only found out on Monday because I also probably got these brackets with chair in there, like I think you're given this kind of responsibility for something kind of structure in this thing. Right? And so, I thought I better get a bit of background. So, I phoned Sam, spoke to him and it was this room was really was one of the kind of influential factors in doing something like this as well. This kind of like very Brutalist sort of space that is also in the basement directly below the roof where the steam is coming off.

✱   Yeah, the location is very important for the-

☐   The brain or is the gut?

✱   I think we are lower than the gut. We are the end of the intestine.

/   Yeah, yeah. Flatulence producers.

✱   They give us food and we produce.

/   Is interesting actually, because Sam mentioned as well that there were a lot of people that were approached and we are a little reluctant because of the

conditions are not being told to much. There not being a public, it being recorded in this way and-

○   You see I just feel great, it means I do not much prep. (03:00:22 laughs)

◻   Yeah, that's what I thought was best about it.

○   Great, I'm gonna go anyway.

/   Very nice to meet you.

✱   Yeah, very nice to meet you.

◻   Nice to meet you.

○   Yeah, you too. Good bye guys, take care.

/   Good luck.

○   Cheers.

/   Yeah.

◻   I quiet like not knowing. I quiet like the opacity of this, I quiet like-

✱   Yeah, it's very confortable.

◻   In a way yeah. In its own way, it's you know, we always thrive to know everything that there is to know because we find that comfortable but not knowing can be equally.

✱   No, for me, the issue was more ... it's far away. It's five hours of train, so it means that I lose two days: one day to go and one day to go back. So, it's painful like, for few hours, you lose three days, in fact.

◻   Yeah, it's one of those things where you couldn't do it on Skype I suppose.

/   Yeah, I think it wouldn't work would it?

◻   That wouldn't work, yeah.

✱   I thought it would be more practical for them to work with people who live in Nottingham directly. Or in London or in-

◻   Yeah, but they mentioned, you know that they are not going to advertise and that everything is going to be word of mouth. So, if it's all yeah people from Nottingham they might not get known quiet so well.

✱   Yeah you are right you don't know where the word to mouth will lead you.

/   I'm kind of, I'm still thinking about this all idea of like the transcript being written out and then totally redacted as a kind of just presence and absence. Which I think is really interesting and I'm thinking about an artist called Gill Majid? Who spent time with the Dutch Secret Service and was given access and interviewed, but he was obviously not allowed to produce kind of any of his scripts or things like that for reasons of national security or whatever and all of the interviewees that the spies and whatnot and spoke to her under conditions of pseudonymity, suspect a different name and so one of the things that, there's an article by an academic or Claire Berger reflects on this, this idea of an aesthetics of the secret. How do you rent give form to something that is secret, secretive? and so a lot of these kind to, in the exhibition, if I remember correctly from the paper, it's a series of kind of neon signs that sort of had likes sly kind of markers about the shape of somebody's nose or like a, or word or somebody might have uttered so there's no, it's there's again we've got this sense of invisibility that points to a fundamental in that sense of opacity in a weird way. And there's something interesting doing the same kind of thing.

✱   I'm sure, I mean, that would be my proposal.

/   Yeah. Absolutely.

✱   I think that there is a very funny paper by *Peter Galison,* the science historian. And he talks about the classified documents in the US: every year they produce — you know this paper?—

☐   No, no, no.

✱   They produce the equivalent of the Library of Congress in terms of classified documents. So, their main problem is not how to keep it secret, it is how to store?

/   How to store!

✱   So, every year they have to unclassify or to declassify files, in order to make room for the new ones. But who is going to decide which documents you are going to declassify? So they have to set up a commission. But the process of selecting this commission is kept secret and they have to put— when you set up a commission, you have to produce reports on that, because you work in the legal frame. So, as soon as you're in the legal frame you produce reports, bureaucracy... so they produce confidential reports about-

/   Which has to be secret!

☐   It has to be stored somewhere.

✱   Yeah, about the commission which will be allowed to unclassify.   **50**

And this commission has to also produce reports about why did they decided to declassify these files!

/   Yeah. Well that sound amazing.

✱   And these reports are also confidential.

/   Yeah. That's fantastic.

✱   So yeah, a big economy in fact. A big trade of-

/   I do like this idea of kind of Trevor Paglen's project of limited photography of secret bases and the actual ends of the capabilities of photography. It's a great project you know! How do you render secrecy or invisibility or whatever like a form? There's something nice about that. Yeah, maybe this could be another example.

✱   Yeah.

/   Yeeeeeah...

☐   Right.