



) So here we are. Reality. Shall we all introduce ourselves first or shall we... Should we do that?

O Yes, let's do that.

) Okay, well, I'm Rajeev Balasubramanyam. I am a writer, Sagittarius, although recently found out I may be Scorpio because the earth's axis has moved since the star signs began. And so we're all one previous. So actually again, Rajeev Balasubramanyam, Scorpio.

\* Hi, I'm Divya Ghelani and I'm a writer and we just got married, Rajeev and I.

□ It's a reality?

\* That's the reality of this situation. Yeah. And I'm curating an exhibition in Leicestershire in England, at the moment. And I'm finishing my first novel. So yes, that's me.

O My name is Mutlu Ergün-Hamaz. I'm a parent. I live in Berlin. I'm a social researcher and I'm also an anti-racism and empowerment activist.

) Oh, sexy!

□ Hi, I'm Carrie Hampel and just for the people listening and the transcriber, I sound like a man, but I'm not. So when you hear this big booming voice, it's... There are two women here just so you can orientate yourself in the acoustic environment. I'm also a writer. I have spent the last 14 years specifically focusing on research on the end of the oil age and almost everything I do has somehow... Is somehow making use of that research and information. One through a near-future novel, and also as a journalist and also working for other artists.

/ Hi, my name is Deniz Utlü. I'm a German-speaking writer from Berlin, as well. I just published my second novel last week, a couple of days ago called *Gegen Morgen* towards mourning or against mourning. And I'm also doing human rights work, which is linked to what you have just said Carrie, because I was working on natural resources and how resource companies do impact human rights.

□ Fantastic. Good eve. Great.

) So we each present for a few minutes. Would anyone apart from me like to go first?

□ No.

) Okay... So I will go first and nobody else said their astrological sign, I noticed, which I think is a sign of how things are to come because I am trying to move away from all of this material reality into another space. But I'm surrounded by political people. My feeling.

**Carrie Hampel**

□

**Deniz Utlü**

/

**Divya Ghelani**

\*

**Mutlu**

O

**Ergün-Hamaz**

**Rajeev**

)

**Balasubramanyam**

□ Doomed, doomed in a bunker.

) Yes. So what I want to talk about when it comes to reality is certain experiences. But one experience, in particular, I have had after many, many years of meditation. I drank Ayahuasca, which is a vine from the Amazon, which the active ingredient is DMT and it takes you on long hallucinogenic journeys. And at one point this plant from the Amazon showed me the nature of reality. And it showed me this dark tree and from this dark space came, this sort of... This is very, very difficult to describe, but it was this kind of laughing energy and it came out and it was many different colours. And out it came, sort of, laughing around. And it was like pure thought or pure consciousness or pure dream, or it was the substance that there was before the universe began.

This was what it was... And then it sort of explained to me that this is... There's a lot of... It was very funny. It was almost like pure laughter, the substance. And then it said that because, in order to play a game, it wanted people to see what it was for fun! It created material reality, which was the same substance. That's what it was saying, but material reality was a sort of hallucinogenic projection of this initial substance. It was particle or wave, this quantum thing. I think maybe referring to that. And all reality was contained in that substance, which is thought, mind, dream. I don't really know what to call it because obviously, I don't really know because I'm only a puny projection of that reality, who thinks he exists. This is what I figured out, and then I've seen mystics refer to it exactly that at the beginning of the Upanishads, which I never really understood until I had this experience.

And it says, "I am whole in the whole is from the whole and nothing could come out." I don't know what the hell it was on about, but then when I read it now I understand what it's talking about. It's talking about this. And it's the reverse actually, I realized, of the Western conception of reality, which begins with the material and says that mind is a projection of the material that exists in the brain, it's electric currents and the brain. And what this is saying is that actually, the material is a projection of the mind. Western philosophy has really said that it's always the other way. But I think in Hindu, Buddhist and some of the Sufis, any mystic from any culture does seem to suggest this. I may be wrong cause I don't know every culture. So... But what I wanted to get towards from there, is why I am slowly becoming less and less interested in politics.

And the reason is because this is all rooted in the material and I seem to be continually moving away from that and moving away, not even from politics because politics are still important in the sense of anti-discrimination, not being oppressed and so on. They're very important. I don't want anyone to lock me in a bunker and experiment on me and so on. Importance of this kind of anti-oppression. But to me this movement towards wisdom is a movement away from identity because we are not this, I am now pointing at myself. We are that and I'm thinking about that giggly substance and which is what mystics say that when they reach enlightenment, there's this one phrase that a very famous mystic, whose name I can't remember said, "I am that," I think that's what he meant. And then also a lot of great mystics when they reach enlightenment, apparently the first thing they do is they laugh and this was a very giggly thing.

And then what I've experienced in meditation... This is why again, my activity towards identity is that while meditating, you're observing yourself but then who is observing because you're not observing yourself with yourself. And then eventually through long periods of meditation... Once I was in this place in California for two weeks on my own, I came to the conclusion "I don't exist," because myself was comprised of memory and thought and sensation and physical... And then they all seem separate and none of those... No unifying thing. It was just a solution and it's part of this projection from the green giggly stuff. That was what I found. And so... And then I also realized that all of this connection, everything is connected in terms of love. That's what the plant told me. It's love that connects everything.

So currently I'm getting quite frustrated in my stupidity at not being able to apprehend this constantly. And I don't even feel like I have any beliefs anymore after this experience. I'm just trying to realize this one thing, and my ego, kind of, takes me away from it and keeps locking me back into identity. And then I think about all the terrible things that are happening in the world and they all seem to be due to belief in the self or belief in identity or belief in a group identity. And then you'd get all this nonsense about Trump and blah, blah, blah, this sort of stuff.

It all seems to be about this identitarianism. It all seems to be this very problematic thing due to a fundamental misapprehension of the nature of reality. And it seems to me that if we understand that we aren't ourselves and we don't exist, except as a projection of the green stuff... Well it really wasn't just green it was many colours... And that we are actually just all, kind of, a part of this giant hallucinogenic phenomenon. Then we can let go of these individual and group identities and be something else. But then you always seem to get locked back into an identity. And then I say these things, and then people put an identity on that and they call you a spiritual hippie, or a Buddhist, or an idiot, or wacko, or cuckoo, or woo-woo and so on. And yeah... But what I really want is just to be left alone and not oppressed. That's my real kind of... And not be oppressed. And the problem I find with this increasingly is... It leads me to not really wanting to do anything and just sort of retire.

But then you'd come... back to a sort of return to materiality by things that you want. Which is kind of moving in the other direction of sensual pleasures, and fame, and status, and so on. This kind of locks you back into that.

/ So you lose your will when you lose your identity?

) Kind of. Yeah... Well you don't want any of those things. So what do you want? Not really much. But then all these things kind of draw me back and then, kind of this anger, hatred. This kind of thing also draws you back into this kind of identitarianism and so on. And then you say, "well, fuck you, I'm this and you're that." And so-

\* Does a desire for justice draw you back? Because that's not those things, fame, or success. That's for a sense of-

) Not really, no. Maybe some compassion, but the justice doesn't seem to be it.

○ I would say that there's also love, huh?

) Yeah, yeah, yes, yes. But then every influence I've had since childhood is trying to draw me in the other direction, I realized. Every single one. And the TV and just everything around me is always trying to draw me back into, "you are this and you are that and this is your identity, and you must do...". And my parents... And oh my God, it just goes on and on and on. But that's really all I have to say.

Yes. Yes... But it was a very interesting thing seeing the substance come out from this black space. And then I'm going to drink Ayahuasca again in about eight or nine days. But my feeling was that there was no real reason for it. It just... It was as if it was just a fun thing to do to create the entirety of the universe, which obviously is interconnected. So it functions because how could it not? But that didn't seem to be any real reason for it because the, sort of, power and the extraordinary power of the whole thing was so great that it could just do it. So that and then yeah... I was having a conversation with a friend of mine who's in her eighties and it seemed to me that the purpose of life was to become aware of this. But then she said, "Yeah... But then if you do then what's the purpose of life?" Cause she seemed already to be aware. So then she said she thinks that there isn't. "You just sort of be." Yeah, so that is all I have to say.

□ Thank you very much.

) Who would like to go next?

\* Should we talk a bit about it or do we just present?

) Oh, we could talk.

/ We could either talk about it and then someone else presents, or we present and then talk about it. But then maybe-

\* We might lose the thread.

/ Yeah.

\* Yeah... So we can talk about it a bit.

□ Yeah. Okay.

) And then in the middle of talking, if anyone feels moved to monologue for a few minutes, just go ahead.

□ There's one point I wanted to pick up on. You said wisdom is moving away from identity and that there's this lovely, giggly thing and that love connects everything.

And when I have been looking into my research and my themes and with our current times and the existence of the internet, I feel like it's still another identity but the human creature. I feel like the human creature, in itself for the first time, has become aware of itself in its entirety. That we're all part of the same living organisms, so to speak. That you can't isolate one part of that creature without damaging the whole body. And I've come from that point of view in terms of... We're living on the planet and we all require the same resources and we are the same. Yeah... Connected by love. Yeah. So I just wanted to throw that in there and the identity circle.

/ I was... When you were talking about love and you also mentioned power, I was thinking that, the opposite of love is actually not hate. It might be power. Like... What do you serve? Do you serve love or do you serve power? Do we act out of love or do you act to seek power? And this is maybe also connected to what you have just said, Carrie, because I think what connects us now may sound very pessimistic, but what connects us now- what makes this connection is characterized more by power than by love. How do we use the planet, how do we connect? We connect through markets and there is always power or at least the desire for power behind it. This love that Rajeev was talking about, and I think what you were also talking about, is something that is a reality for many groups, for many indigenous groups, for instance, it's a truth long before globalization, but I don't want to get too much towards politics.

□ Also, interestingly, sorry. On the indigenous thing – this is the interesting thing – is coming from Australia: The first time I found out about our indigenous cultures in any kind of concrete sense was through the internet over the other side of the world. And that indigenous cultures are now, more than ever, finding more connection (i.e. solidarity and communication with each other) so that we're actually able to access that deeper wisdom from many more thousands of years than our piddly little Western civilization.

/ That's so absurd.

○ But is power 'per se' a bad thing? I mean maybe there is some kind of toxic power that actually damages and harms and destroys, and maybe they can also be what Rajeev describes. I mean it's very powerful. Maybe there's some kind of power that is healing and loving and... And trying to bring things together. So I'm wondering if it's more, kind of, a power that has this purpose of feeding that... The ego, the thing that actually stands against perceiving that divine reality that Rajeev describes.

\* I would agree with that. I think how we conceive of power and how we conceive of love and love's power is interesting and, and, it says a lot about the realities that we exist in. I think I mentioned earlier that I've been reading a book about becoming a witch, which is in a sense quite funny if you think about things like Wicca... But it's quite serious and brilliant and feminist in the sense that the writer – the witch – is talking about reconnecting with divine power and divine energy and love. And also, it's about reconnecting with realities we tend to ignore, different spaces of power that we are taught to sideline.

The writer speaks a lot about her mother's kitchen as a space of power and energy that speaks to me very much... the idea that we cast spells that are fully ignored in our daily lives and that we ourselves ignore in our consciousness, sources of power and energy, fully spaces of loving, pure energy wherein you can recharge mind and body and spirit. It's amazing that in patriarchy, these spheres had been so sidelined.

But I was also thinking about what Rajeev was saying, because we meditate together, about mind as body in Hinduism and Buddhism and how growing up in Western white supremacist culture and Western cultures, we, some... In our daily interactions we often forget that mind is body because we don't discourse like that, particularly within intellectual spaces. And I think there's something quite powerful there about connection, and that then could link us to this idea of love as power. Love is power through connection. Love as, yeah... Love is power. That then separates... No, that then re-imagines power as a space that's inclusive, loving and kind and warm and compassionate. Compassion perhaps is the word I'm trying to describe as power, a reimagining of what power could mean. What it truly does mean.

) But I think in European thought because the mind is always located in the brain. This is Descartes, it's always in the brain. Mind, body, Cartesian split, is it... So instead of just being everything, as in a "we come first", and then comes mind, matter comes first then comes mind and then it appears that it's, from what I've experienced, it's the other way around. I don't know.

\* When you said laughter is substance, it kind of made me think of children and love again. I have a baby niece who is one year's old and I've been thinking about how love is as important as food to her growth. It's more important, perhaps. It's extremely... And how she gravitates towards it. Though she doesn't conceive of it intellectually, she knows it. And this is incredible... The power of her understanding of what an embrace means from a loving person as opposed to someone who is perhaps authoritarian or cold and she understands it intuitively. And so she has this intuitive power about love, which is also about survival.

) The babies who are not cuddled die, apparently.

□ I was just about to say that, and that it's been improved. They've found in, now, conventional Western medicine that hugs help. So that there is love... Love does, in fact, have a very tangible and even measurable power if you're measuring the person's health.

\* Yes, I read it, too. Twenty-second hugs and six-second kisses. Scientists measured it.

□ I wanted to pick up on something that you said about inclusive... And when we're talking about power and love, and I was talking... Thinking about this, sort of, an ailment that the human creature has is bullying. And bullying for resources...

Bullying on a personal, on a micro and macro sense and that the opposite of bullying is being inclusive and that, that's... And being inclusive destroys bullying as... So if power, if love, if power is inclusive then it has maybe a... Is not a destructive thing. Cause I was also talking to a friend about the human, we are kind of a following-animal. We need leaders. There's a sort of a practical thing about... If everybody's in a situation and somebody's taken the time to think about something, then it makes sense to not have to reinvent the wheel. And say, "Oh well I trust them." Their opinion is... you know... But if that person uses that power to bully people and rather than to spread it, then it very quickly becomes an ailment rather than a-

) The shadow of the leader is the authoritarian dictator. But a good leader is a great thing. We all need them. We all appreciate a good leader.

\* We have talked about love and power, and I was just thinking about unconditional love and conditional love, the way they conceive of power differently. These two spaces.

/ Oh, when I was thinking about power as the opposite of love, I was thinking about power as an attribute of a person. Being inclusive and sharing is actually giving up power. It can increase the power in total and we can be much more powerful together. But if I give up some power, let's say for instance money or resources and say, "Hey, I don't want to be alone with this money, although I could buy anything I want to, I'll share with you." And then all together we do something with it – just to have an illustration –, then, of course, I personally give up some of the power but there might be more power for, for all of us afterwards.

So I think what I meant is really, do I choose power or love? I have to choose between them. There is a conflict rather than an opposition. Maybe power is not the opposite of love. Maybe there's a conflict between love and power, but love is of course powerful. It's only not then attached to a person's aim, or to a person's identity. And that might be something where you can have still of will even if you move from identity to wisdom.

□ I just want to pick up on your point about power and love and your point that being inclusive means you give up power. I actually disagree. I think not being inclusive makes power more vulnerable, and someone who is not being inclusive becomes more and more vulnerable to losing that power. And that a good leader, being inclusive, will inherently have more power because it's not based on taking things away from people.

Now, I'll take it to a geopolitical level just to try and explain on a macro level... For example, one of the things that I'm busy with is the Western world and their dependence on oil, and that they're bullying the Middle East – which has 70% of the world's oil – in the form of Islamophobia. So the actual situation is that the West is incredibly vulnerable because they desperately need oil. We all use it and we don't have it. And because we're not being inclusive, we're putting ourselves on a terrible pillar based on a lot of suffering we're not sharing and therefore it can only be taken away.



Whereas if we were being more inclusive, then nobody would be needing to take anything away from anybody, if we were also sustainable. But I think there's something... It's like... when I think about the dictator who becomes more and more mad, it's the... In order to retain the power, they end up making themselves more and more vulnerable and more and more likely to lose it.

\* When you guys talk about power, I'm thinking of... I imagine one as hierarchical or even a pyramid structure and the other one as like... when we talk about love or communities or interconnectedness... this other power I see as circles, smaller and smaller circles of power. One seems to be more inherently capitalist than the other.

□ Like a flat hierarchy, as they say.

\* Hierarchy-

□ Flat... Flat structures, rather than-

\* How funny. I wasn't thinking of it. I was thinking more about connectedness and I guess I'm thinking about perhaps what we would traditionally think of as more a kind of feminine idea of what power could be... or is, actually is, and is often ignored or then de-powered.

□ And it was ignored and not... We have already had a very strong existing economy of love, which is inclusive and can, of course, be abused or whatever. But it started being talked about in the '80s in feminist economics – that if women's and retirees and anyone doing any caring job stopped, the world economy would collapse from one day to the next. And that is inherently an economy of love because it's unrewarded we don't value it, we don't pay it, we don't even see it and recognize it most of the time. And yet people keep on doing it and there's a huge power in that the world economy could still collapse, but we would still love our children. We would still love the people we love. We would still care for the people we care for.

/ Wow, I never saw it that way actually. Because this unpaid work actually is exploitation. I mean of course towards our own children it's not... Well if they work on the field it is. And then, for instance, we were just doing a study on palm oil and the supply chain of palm oil. And then the workers in the field, they usually have to have a quota. But they do not have enough time to fulfill this quota.

This is why their wives and children start to work on the farm. And the company would say, "Hey, they are not allowed to so it's your fault. Why do you let your children work on the farm?" But they have to, to reach this quota. This is really unpaid work. I mean part of it can be... It can go towards modern slavery, actually. However, I can see that there is also another dimension of this unpaid work that can be, could be, potentially seen as an economy of love. But we use it as an economy of abuse, I think.

□ We use it as... the world economy, it's absolutely... I mean: as a single mum, I have two kids, look after them more or less on my own. And I'm very aware of every single day the things that I'm expecting to do for free, and that our economy wouldn't work if people like me didn't do those things for free. And I don't do them because I necessarily have to. Although many of the things I also have to, but they're incredibly rewarding. So there's... Yes, our economies exploit that fact that people will do things for love irrespective of whether they're paid or not. We will still do them. Yeah.

) But how does this Victorian parenting model fit in with this. Which was a deliberate attempt to remove love from parenting?

□ Oh, right, yeah, yeah. Wow. Yeah.

\* It's interesting, when does love... When does love become control? This is the question that I think of with I think of Victorian parenting. I mean, that was a really overt attempt to control through this holy idea of family...

) It wasn't love, though.

\* Yeah, it wasn't love in the first place.

) But then you said conditional love and then this raises the question, is conditional love, love at all?

\* Is it even... Is it even love?

) Is it just blackmail?

[laughter]

\* This makes me want to explode the bunker, for some reason. I'm seriously crazy, upset.

) Bunker per definition cannot be exploded, though.

○ There's a huge spider crawling towards you.

\* Oh, fucking hell! This makes me think this spider is conditional love.

○ It's a good sign. It's a good omen. Spiders bring luck.

\* Spiders bring luck. I'm fine.

) She's fine. Shall we... Shall we do another presentation or should we continue talking?

/ Well, maybe just one more point at this from my side because we were talking now a lot about love and power, coming from what you have said Rajeev, but what is the connection to reality? Of course, we can ask: do we have a reality of love or a reality of power in our private life and in the world economy? Could think a little bit about that aspect, as well?

\* Can you say it, again?

/ What does it mean for reality what this conflict of power and love is, or how we were talking now about love and power, economy of love, moving from identity to wisdom? How does that all really connect with reality? Because when Rajeev was making a distinction: You took Ayahuasca then there was this dark tree.

) I don't know what that was.

/ Yeah, but you described it as a dark tree and then there was a substance in it, which was pure universe.

) Consciousness or thought, I don't know.

/ And then from there we came to a 'giving up identity towards wisdom', the Western concept of reality. And I'm just thinking right now is how we are talking about love and economy and exploitation and power seems to be somehow trapped in the Western concept of reality as well.

\* Definitely.

/ Although we have also talked about some indigenous aspects.

) But you also said economics and then the, as we know, the two guiding principles of economics that we assume from economic actors is profit maximization, utility maximization and most of us don't even live like that. Well, some people live like that, but we usually call them psychopaths. It's almost predicated on a selfish psychopathy.

/ I think we are a psychopath, because we do internalize those mechanisms.

\* Definitely.

/ And there is nothing really... There's no chance. You can get aware of it, but you learn to internalize it at an early age. You said it: "I learn it at school. There was always something trying to move me, move me there".

) Everywhere.

/ And I think in that regard we are actually all psychopaths and we are trying to deal with that. Right?

\* And at the same time we conceive of ourselves as nice so... Which is also very schizophrenic.

) But that's our essential nature, trying to come through against all them. So it's constant conflict between wanting to be part of the source and wanting to be this individuated, selfish power-driven Nietzschean and-

\* So you believe there is an essential nature? Because many people don't believe this.

) Part of that bubbly stuff.

\* The bubbly stuff.

/ Essential but bubbly. Anyone want to say anything more on this?

) Or wish to go and deliver the presentation or just keep talking. We can forget the presentations if you like and keep talking or, but if, who wants, or-

\* We could.

□ You haven't said something and I've said a lot so I feel like-

○ I can present if you want, I don't mind or does anybody else want to?

\* Want? No I'm good.

○ Go ahead, Divya, continue.

\* No, I'm going to close this laptop because I've got 34%.

○ I think there's also a power plug there, somewhere. All right. Okay, so I brought some music. I'm just going to play a bit. I'm not going to play the whole tune cause it's actually six minutes long. So I'll play about the first one or two minutes.

) And the tune is about reality?

○ The track is actually called... It's from Tha Dogg Pound. It came out in 1995 and it's called *Reality*. It's like parental advice, it's got explicit lyrics, so-

) We're all adults.

/ You have to get closer with your microphone.

\* Louder!

[*Reality* playing]

○ Yeah. This is the verse. The first verse. I'm just going to pause it here, and I want to start reading my texts. And I got another song that I'll play towards the end. The text that I wrote, I called it *Escape From Reality* because the chorus of that song from Tha Dogg Pound, *Reality*, is like, "...there's nowhere for me to turn, there's nowhere for me to hide from reality." This quote from the '90s hip hop duo, Tha Dogg Pound, suggests that reality is inescapable. There's nowhere we can turn. There's nowhere we can hide. Reality will always come back to find us to make us confront it. I remember as a teenager being obsessed with the song. It was stuck on repeat and I nodded my head to it, just like now. There were plenty of realities I wanted to escape from as a teenager. There was a question of belonging and identity as an Anatolian-German Alevi. There was a question of which bodies I felt sexually attracted to. There was a question of coming from a working-class family and growing up in a white upper-class neighbourhood and many other realities I wanted to escape from, mainly by using recreational drugs until I figured I was actually naturally confused and I didn't really need any weed.

Hip-hop music really helped keeping my eyes and ears open. Political rap made me think a lot about racial realities in Germany. I had a few close friends, some of them white. They were very loyal and they would have knocked the teeth out of any neo-Nazi that had just looked at me the wrong way, but when I tried to talk to them about my experience of everyday racism, it was like hitting a wall. They had difficulties in accepting the reality I lived. They had difficulties in understanding how such an absurd reality of racial oppression could be part of the centre of society, not just its fringes. Their denial of my reality made it finally very difficult to stay friends. It was only years later for my anti-racism activism that I realized how far removed and at the same time how close our realities were. Through my work, I took a look at an image of a multi-stable figure.

It was W.E. Hill's famous adaptation of 'My wife and my mother-in-law', showing an image where the perception flips between seeing an elderly woman's face or a young woman's turned back. This kit bit highlights two realities that are related to each other. There's a dialectic between whiteness and blackness or POC-ness and one can't exist without the other. At the same time, white people do live very far removed from the realities of people of colour. A headscarf-wearing journalist in Germany who openly shared experiences of racial discrimination was once told by an editor in chief, a middle-aged, middle class, heterosexual, white male, that sometimes he was wondering if she was living in another country. So, it's like one image, one reality, but as seen experience and perceived in very different ways. What's interesting though is that people of colour do understand very well how white realities work, whilst white people often remain ignorant towards the realities of non-white people.

Funnily enough, once the subject of racism's breached in a conversation, then white people's brains often shut off because they're too scared of saying something racist. And people of colours brains often shut off because they're too scared that their life experience will be denied. There's actual research about that. It explains also the many brainless discussions I had about the subject of racism.

Our brains are really funny things. Sometimes they have a hard time distinguishing what is imagined and what is real. There's a really interesting experiment which was done with a group of basketball players. The basketballers were divided into three groups. The first group practised for one hour physically, lay-up shots. The second group for one hour just did nothing and the third group for one hour practised lay-up shots only in their minds.

For one hour, they sat there and imagined how they would pick up the ball, aim, throw the ball, and that they would score. The first group who practised physically, eight out of 10 shots scored. The second group who did nothing, three out of 10 shots scored. The third group, which had only practised in their minds, eight out of 10 shots score. They were as good as the group that was practising physically.

★ That's amazing.

○ Some neuroscientists even suggest that we are actually unable to perceive those things that we cannot imagine. There are stories about Native Americans that were standing at the beaches of the Americas and some were unable to perceive the large boats on which the Europeans arrived at their coasts. I do not believe it is a tale about the ignorance of Native Americans, it rather highlights that they could not imagine such a large structure floating on the sea and therefore they had a hard time actually perceiving it.

Nevertheless, perceptions can change. I remember when my child was born and how that immediately and significantly changed the way I perceive the world. I began to experience joys and fears that I didn't even know existed. Many people experience moments in their lives that lead to a significant paradigm shift, a shift of how we perceive reality. It doesn't have to be a child being born. It can be many different things that fracture our reality. Maybe it's a nervous breakdown after a burnout, maybe it's the realization that our body does not reflect the Gender we actually have or it's the realization because we move in a wheelchair or because we speak with our hands using sign language that society is disabling instead of enabling us.

So, let me fracture this text. There's the famous children's song, "Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream" and in Buddhism, but also in Sufism, we just talked about it, there's the notion that we are actually living in an illusion, that we are living in a dream. There's the notion that reality is far too ginormous for us to perceive and that our tiny egos actually stand in the way of seeing a divine truth. To finish with the words of the rapper KRS-One, "Reality ain't always the truth. Rhymes equal actual life in the youth." Now, I'm going to play that now actually.

★ Can you say that last line again? Last-

○ We're going to hear it now.

\* Okay.

[R.E.A.L.I.T.Y. playing]

○ All right, so that's it from me.

□ Wow.

) Cool.

□ Super cool.

\* That was great.

/ Yeah.

) This imagination thing and the ego thing is very interesting to me.

□ Yeah, totally juicy.

) Yeah.

\* What do you mean?

) Oh no... Because I was just thinking about Ayahuasca again. Which is like being in this dialogue with a goddess and she's well aware that this puny ego you're talking about... That me or any other human is so limited that it can't really understand what she's saying. And it's almost like she gets a bit contemptuous sometimes and sort of slaps you around "Oh my God" and then sometimes she starts showing me things and I just think, "Well, I can't understand this," and then she starts showing me other planets. I was thinking, "Well, I don't know what to do with this. I can barely conceive it on my own planet and then the actual vastness of the whole thing. I mean, I can't really," and then this realization that... You know, we're talking about Western thought and so on and that it almost feels like Western thought conditions us into imagining less.

\* Yes.

) The minute I start to talk about reincarnation, people mock me. This happens a lot and then that blocked me from believing in it for a long time and then everybody I knew... I know I wasn't talking about you [laughter]. I wasn't talking about you [laughter] And then everyone... But then because it's not done to believe in this, right? So, that blocked me for a long time until everything that my experiences, and so on, and belief systems were pointing me in that direction. I still wasn't able to go there because it was like my mind was being shrunk and shut down, or I keep meeting people in these new circles that I move in who talk about different kinds of entities, aliens and angels and so on and then I started to explore this dimension as well.

But then it's very dangerous to talk about things like this because you'll be viciously mocked, and the thing is if somebody... If you're saying something that somebody else doesn't believe in or agree with, that's normal, right? But what is this vicious mockery? What is that? It's something someone else can't imagine. Why would they want to? What is this tendency towards violence towards people who believe something different to you? Or really getting very aggressive about opposing world views or... I don't know what that is. It's a funny thing. What do you think it is?

○ I don't know. Maybe it's just... Maybe I assume it comes from fear. I think it comes from fear of being confronted with a part of the reality that a lot of people simply don't understand and yeah... I think it has, especially in Western culture, I mean, non-Western cultures, the invisible is so much more present. It's so much more part of everyday life. People speak to their ancestors for example or just believe in the presence of spiritual beings, like angels, et cetera, stuff like that. It's so much more than I think... Enlightenment in Europe has done huge damage on that and it's also at the same time, it's also very interesting. It allowed almost new forms also of genocide through colonialism, through the Shoah and everything. I wonder if that is related even though, I mean, not that I want to say that religions didn't cause any genocide either. I mean, of course, they did as well, but I think it was also very much... It was related to the negation of other people's spirituality, which allowed that mass murder and-

) But which came first?

○ And maybe it's related. I don't know-

) Which came first? Is it the negation of spirituality that then led to colonialism and this power that you're talking about? This aggressive desire? Or is it that this aggressive desire for materialism and expansion came first and then therefore by definition you have to negate your spirituality, otherwise the entire project-

□ I think it's essential. To dominate and rape and pillage, it's essential to negate spirituality. It's a very important instrument of doing that.

\* When we spoke about love and Victorian schooling... actually, I read quite a lot on the history of schooling in Britain and Victorian England... and just as you were speaking, I began to think how Victorian schooling and family life is linked to colonialism and obviously the Victorian public school was conceived of in part as a colonial project to negate young men's emotions in order for them to be able to hurt others... Not a sense of caring and fellowship with humans in other parts of the world. And then that then it's very linked to parenting, Victorian parenting as well. So, when we speak about... Well, it was conditional love. Love, I think in that context it was brainwashing.

) And spiritual mutilation.

\* Spiritual mutilation is a beautiful way of putting it, I think. Yes.



/ This, I mean, I'm not... You just said you have to cut off spirituality for domination, but actually when we think about early times of colonialism, it was all grounded on the Catholic church and-

) Spain, Portugal-

/ Yeah, Spain and Portugal ... You can see it or judge it as you want to, but in the Catholic church, they killed this. They tried to erase the spirituality of what they called the others or what they saw as the others. They tried to replace it with another, with a christian spirituality and later through market expansion. It wasn't spirituality, it was money, but at that time, at the early time of colonialism, it started actually with spirituality, didn't it?

○ Well, it started with religion. I would certainly go very 'd'accord' with that, but I don't know. I guess it depends on how we define these things and how much we can maybe also... I don't know if it's possible to make a distinction between spirituality and religion.

□ Please let's. Let's make a big distinction between spirituality and religion.

○ Well, it is a very secular move to do that and at the same time and I don't believe in secularism. As strange as it sounds from an Alevi that has suffered a lot of, through collectively and historically, through religious violence, I don't believe that it will get better through secularism.

□ Oh no, I'm not saying that. I just think religion has elements of spirituality in it. Particularly... um... I come from a Protestant background, which has no sense of drama, very little sense of spirituality, no sense of theatre, ritual. A lot of things that generate love they sort of take away and remove. I think that a lot of religions... For example, the Catholic religion has a lot of... I mean, every religion has some term for compassion. That's the universal amongst religions that we all have some we need that for our survival and religion enables spirituality to come into our lives, but at the same time, religion can do exactly the opposite and be used as an instrument of war and domination and particularly on the Protestant thing, I'd like to... There's a big, very fragile illusion that Protestants have, particularly in the Western world, reality is that: Protestants are the richest people in the world. We have more wealth than anyone else.

We are generally white and there is a very fragile illusion on that because that is based on a massive wealth that belongs to everybody, and one of the ways that we try and do that is say that, "Oh, we're very rational and we're very enlightened and educated," and all the rest of it. But for example, on this, let's say the 'othering' that is happening at the moment and this fragile situation I was talking about resources is that, let's say the Protestant world. I mean, okay, huge generalization, but we're the ones using the most precious resource at the moment that's running out. I mean, we've got peak everything, but there's this huge fragile situation with oil and shown by just last week, sadly, the attacks, everybody goes into panic. We are so fragile and the people that have that oil are generally Muslim and Arabic people.

So, it's completely within our interests to take... We've constructed particularly since 9/11, but generally for the last century, since the first world war, we've constructed a narrative that makes it, "Oh, us white Protestants, with all our wealth, is because of our education and we created industrialization," or something and completely negating the rest of that whole equation. And what's ended up when we're talking about leaders becoming fragile and not spreading the love, *that's* the state we're in. We're in the state where the white Protestant Western world is *terrified*, for good reason... When you look at Trump supporters and Brexit supporters and the people in the army who had all this propaganda about the biggest threat to Western... Well, there is good reason, but it's not Islam and we're this fragile ego that doesn't also have... You were talking about things that we can imagine.

We've missed the opportunity since we've industrialized. We've missed the opportunity of a framework, an imaginative framework, of what is actually going on, which is we're using finite resources that we will run out of and instead placed all kinds of other realities in order to bully people for those resources that we need and now we're in this terrifying situation. When I think about Trump and Brexit supporters, when I think about the German army officer who just got arrested for trying to... He had a plan, organized plan to murder several people and say it was Syrian refugees. It was recently in the newspaper.

Yeah, these guys... These young guys are terrified. They go to war, they're involved in this whole machinery. They're getting all this information that their world is ending, but they are given... no imaginative framework to do anything constructive about it. And now as a white Western Protestant, we're in this situation where we need the resources. We also are fighting catastrophes of an unprecedented scale on climate change. We need those people, those army people, we need everybody in the planet to get through and we can't access them because it's saying, like you said, these separate realities, you can't even begin to explain the situation to someone who's head's been filled with something else.

○ Maybe we'd like to return to one of the points that Deniz was making about that tension between love and power and I was thinking now that we also touched upon enlightenment and Rajeev, you mentioned Descartes. I mean, the Western notion of the individual is, "I think and therefore I am," but when we look at other notions of a person, for example, like Ubuntu and I'm not talking about the Linux Operating System. I mean the belief system that comes predominantly in South Africa. They say, "A person is a person through other persons," and so, we have a completely different base of how we understand ourselves-

★ 'Beingness'-

○ Yeah, of 'beingness'... of interconnectedness and yeah... So maybe there is this tension between some individual power. Do I love myself as the small being that I perceive myself or between a communal power? The example that you gave that I have a lot of money and then I share it because I want to spread my love in the community and share my resources with them and yeah-

) But you know how Divya was talking about conditional love. And then I was thinking that Carrie, you were saying about colonialism and Deniz, this colonial project because they would argue... A lot of colonialists would argue that they're doing it out of love. They did. Continually-

□ It's a classic bullying tactic, isn't it?

) It's just that conditional authoritarian love is maybe a better word than for conditional love then-

\* Oh sorry, Carrie. And if you do this to children from a young age... If you tell them this is love, then they will grow up thinking this, this skewed idea of what love is and they will disseminate that.

○ It's true.

) And look at the rhetoric during the Iraq war. I mean... A lot of the rhetoric was, "We're liberating people, we're helping people"-

○ "We bring them justice"-

\* Or democracy.

□ And the biggest, fattest, misconception is, "Oh, we're invading Muslim countries for women." I remember before... yeah. Before the Iraq Wars or before the Taliban was doing terrible things in Afghanistan and the only people interested were, sort of, a few dispersed feminists and of course the people living there. Nobody gave a shit. Really, nobody gave a shit and then that whole...

○ They were funded by the US.

□ Exactly. The people were put there... Taliban was deliberately put in Afghanistan for a reason and then there's this narrative, "Oh, we're invading you because we love you. We're invading you to help you. Oh, we're going into Muslim countries to liberate women," and the reality is that the opposite has happened with women from Muslim backgrounds. They have increased discrimination in Western countries, but obviously now horrific situations because of exactly that. That sort of saving... So, it's like the bully who says, "Oh, I'm doing it because I love you."

) But isn't that all abuse?

□ Yes.

) Does all abuse include gas-lighting then-

□ Yes.

) Or I'm doing this for your own good.

\* "Gaslighting" is a great word when we discuss the reality of power relations, I think. I remember learning that word first and that was an unveiling, learning that word.

□ I wrote notes-

) There is a film where a husband convinced his wife she was crazy, I think, but he did something with... They had gas lamps in the house and he either turned them off or switched them on. Anyway, he can. So, what you do is you basically it's, "I abuse you, but I tell you simultaneously I'm not abusing you and that you're crazy because you think I'm abusing you."

\* And then you start to question your own reality and then you agree with the oppressor's reality.

□ And then typically if someone is being bullied and being treated badly and then they start behaving weirdly as you do when you're being bullied, then you say, "See? You're crazy!"

) Like Aboriginals developing a drink problem.

□ Exactly, then you get the victim-blaming as the very important part of-

\* If you think of it en masse, I mean... We talk about it within interpersonal relationships. It's in psychology magazines a lot at the moment, but if you think about it in relation to colonialism, it's an interesting way of conceiving of the colonial project and-

□ Go on-

\* It imbues that term with actually the violence it deserves because actually, it does a huge amount of violence on the individual and then on a mass scale. It's the imposition. It's an imposition, isn't it? It's an authoritarian imposition on someone, whether it be on their lands or their internal landscape.

□ And bullying is always done for a reason. That's the thing that we forget. It's that someone who is in a position of power doesn't just bully for no reason. They either want to maintain an imbalance of power or there are resources that they want to use. So, whenever there is bullying, whenever any group is being persecuted in many particular ways, the question always to ask is, "What does the person bullying want?" Forget the victim just for the moment, apart from their suffering, there's always a reason. There's always, like-

\* What's the reason?

□ For example, in the Middle East it's very clear about oil, but anything. It might be social status in a micro sense, it might be social status or someone who has...

Like, typically people in schools who are bullied, have a mixture of social courage and some weakness and the dynamics of bullying is always to pick on that weakness. So that people, and this is another part of sort of gas-lighting, is that you take the weakness and say, "This is why you're getting bullied." So, the typical example is, for the example of Islamophobia. People will say, "Yes, but women and homosexual people, there's all this terrible stuff happening within Islam," and then someone else from the outside will say... Identify that and say, "Oh, that's true," and then all of a sudden the whole narrative of that bullying... It's like you have kids on a bus, there's me with my big nose or let's say me with my deep voice. The guy on the back of the bus wants to show the other guys that he's really in control. He's got his own agenda, he wants something, he picks on my big nose or my deep voice or whatever and everyone else will see the big nose and the deep voice. They won't see that he's trying to-

○ Get something out of-

□ Get something out of it, equalize a social deficit that he feels.

\* It's what Trump's doing all the time on Twitter actually. He does it as to deflect, I think, the attention from himself-

□ Yeah and then people say, "Oh, that's true." So, it's all justified and then in Islamophobia, the classic thing is to pick on the position of women and of course, the more countries put in disastrous situations with either war or ridiculous wealth, often it's women who suffer.

\* Well there are stages towards genocide. And there is an early stage when things are happening to women, because war draws itself first on the body of women through various modes of abuse and yeah... it's a very systematic process and it has been studied in various war zones as a warning sign. I think as women of colour, you're always hyper-aware of white feminism and all the various ways in which it's just there to fuck you over and I mean... gaslighting, if we're talking about the term, I mean... that's the term, that's what white feminism does and you'll be in these situations with white feminists and you see how easy it is for them to own the space and to discard your political voice, your agency, your view of the world. And actually what you were saying, I really... So, at the end of your talk, the song you put on, you said about how every black person has three realities. This was one of the lines and I was thinking about... actually, I've been thinking quite a lot about I guess people of colour in white supremacist culture and society, we think a lot about realities and we do a lot of code-switching.

It's this term that has again, 'gaslighting'. People are speaking about a lot more now. And I really do think that 'code-switching' as a person of colour feels like one of those things that is your problem but also your superhero power because whilst you are fully aware that the reality given to you in white supremacist societies is fucked up and you don't know how to exist in it, you're sort of learning a language to speak against it via the awareness that code-switching gives you.

A language of resistance ... So first of all, it starts as a language of resistance, but you want a language of is-ness, don't you? You want to just create space to be yourself in the world, to be yourself and feel okay.

) I think the thing is, what I figured out was that, well... I wasn't the first person to figure this out, but it was a sort of big moment for me. It was when I figured out that the discourse of whiteness is innately anti-dialogical, that you can't argue with why. It'll just take you everywhere and just say something ridiculous and then you have to unpick that and then say something, but what if I'm actually a cat? And then you have to deconstruct the cat and then it just goes on and fascism is like whiteness. It's innately anti-rational. There is no rationality in its apparently rational discourse and probably this is true of all oppressive discourses. So, you could spend eight... I remember when I was in my twenties constantly trying to think of arguments to come up with against racism and then when you've got one, they'll give you another, it will go on. You just can't do it. If you remain locked in that discourse, you go completely mad. You can't-

/ It makes you mad, yeah, but I'm afraid it is rational. I'm afraid racism and fascism, both, they are rational. The assumptions are of course crazy, but on the basis of those assumptions, saying that you are inferior, is rational.

○ That's the rational. Or if you think racism or colonialism to the end is always genocide... It's always the alienation of the other in order to take the land, in order to take the resources. I mean, Australia is an interesting example. 11 million Aboriginals lived in Australia before the white settlers stepped their foot on there and I think now it's a little over 300... 400,000-

□ 1% of the population. In one hand, it's been a very 'successful' genocide in a horrific sense in that people have been... Languages have been destroyed, cultures have been destroyed, but the interesting thing about the Australian Indigenous religions is that Indigenous Australians were unconvertible. They're one of the few indigenous populations that could not be converted to Christianity because of the 60,000 years of living culture. So, we have this incredible precious thing so incredibly rooted to the physical environment that the only way that they could get Indigenous Australians controlled was to take them away from their land that was there. None of the usual sort of colonial, religious, blah, blah, hierarchical narrative worked. They had to physically remove people-

) And that's why they kept adopting them and putting them in these schools-

□ Right up until the sixties/seventies, even now doing things like taking away, in small indigenous communities, taking away water supplies or saying, "Oh, we can't afford to keep this going"... Still, it's an ongoing sort of passive genocide, if you like.

) Well, what I meant by anti-irrational, I meant... See I'm talking about this and I'm saying whiteness does that. And then you were to respond...

Well you just said whiteness and that's as racist as what you're claiming, so you are racist and we're both racists [laughter]. Maybe we're all racist. So why do we have to just pick on white people? And then if you try and deconstruct that, that's what I mean by anti... And then I think that fascism is equally anti-rational and that it's not... I mean surely fascism is all about emotion... It seems to me.

/ That's the rhetoric.

\* It's interesting.

/ But that's the rhetoric. I mean in a deeper conceptual way it is... For instance, when we talk about elections in Germany, people are constantly mixing up populism with real... Racism is rational, it is its purpose that is not: eliminating the other.

O Well, I don't know. I think maybe the assumption is that we think human beings are actually per se rational, but we're actually not. If you look into that, when we look at a brain again, we only use 10% of our brain functions and stuff like that. And people say that 10% is what we perceive rationally and the other 90% is how we actually perceive the world through our body and with our feelings and emotions and all sorts of other senses, which again, through Western education has cut off. Because there's not such a thing... There's no subject in school that teaches emotions. There's no emotional learning as a subject in school. Best Western schools are a good example because you use math and grammar.

These are all kind of cognitive skills, but there's no emotional learning, there's no spiritual learning that takes place in Western education. And I think that's part of it. We think it is rational because we think the human being is rational, but we're actually not. It's absolutely irrational.

) And a lot of the emotional learning was contained within religion and when religion became abolished in the Western world, then emotional learning kind of went with it even... Yeah. I know. I was just going to suggest it might be a good time Divya if you wanted to present.

\* Yes, I think so. Yeah.

) But I also wanted to say, does anyone need the bathroom?

/ Hold on.

) Because we could have a bathroom break.

/ That's not part of the game.

) We're not allowed?

- / No, we are.
- You get shot on the way out, you could have run.
- ) When I said if anyone needs the bathroom I don't even need the bathroom, that was also my way of saying that I need the bathroom...
- \* Do we all have a bathroom break?
- ) You don't have to go to the bathroom. Shall we?
- Where's the bathroom?
- ) I can show you. You don't need to go.
- \* Do we have to take this off?
- If you need to go then you go.
- \* What if this mechanism... We go to the bathroom with this on, then can they hear us pissing?
- ) Yes.
- \* Would you like?
- Everybody likes streams. Come on, live stream.
- ) Is there anyone else?
- \* Yes. I need to go to the bathroom.
- I'll wait.
- What shall we do in the meantime though?  
Shall we say something?
- / Maybe you could bring some coffee as well.
- It's too far away.
- ) Should anyone drink some coffee?
- That was a joke.
- ) The coffee is right there.



○ It's fine. Sure it's fine.

/ But maybe meanwhile we could also... We don't have to shut up, right? Because I think there are two realities, we didn't really talk about right now. The notion of two realities, the white reality and the reality of people of colour is actually a very painful observation, because this is also one of the things that drive you mad because you think like, "Okay, I'm telling the story," but everybody's saying, "What are you talking about?" Like this guy who was talking to the girl with the headscarves saying that I feel like you're living in another country. And in German, there is this word for that. The parallel society which German mainstream media used, sometimes still use, for actual communities of colour but-

○ They don't use it for themselves.

/ And they won't use it for themselves. This is precisely connected to what you have said about perception, that you can only perceive what you can imagine. I think that draws a very pessimistic picture because actually, it's almost impossible then for white people to understand the reality of people of colour.

○ Well, in everyday life, like you said, it's very painful for people of colour to have that reality denied and very often at some point really think, "Am I just mad, or do I actually experience these things?" And that's also one of the reasons why you have a high percentage of mental illness within communities of colour. Because of that. Because they keep on talking about their experiences and then people are saying, "No, what you experienced wasn't related to racism, it was something completely else." And then at some point, they are so confused about their feelings and their own perception and their own intuition and lose it. Yeah. But I think it is possible. This is why I also said, there's a possibility of shifting your perception. And I think if we can draw onto these kinds of experiences, which almost everybody in... Life doesn't work on a straight line.

There's always somewhere where there's a cut. Where there's a break where people experience something, whether it could be that day I'm diagnosed with a very serious illness or some of the other examples that I gave. There's always an experience where we actually realize life is far more complex than what was being presented to us as life. What we like seeing the media and stuff like that. What we think a normal life has to be, to be married, to have children to have your mortgage or whatever. There's a possibility for change there, and that's also part of my work. Part of my work is actually helping white people, we invite them to change their perspective.

/ Your work as an anti-racism trainer.

○ Anti-racism work. Exactly. As connect to that... It's showing them, "Look, we want to show you a part of a reality that you might not have seen before and is more than actually seeing, we actually want you to start feeling, to what it means to be white." And of course, there are some people that go into resistance and they don't want to look into these things, but very often it works and people come out and they experienced themselves in a different way. And then I see how people change, but it takes time.

And you can't do this with just a couple of hours. It takes a whole weekend and even that weekend it's just a door that we open and people have to go through and continue also going along that path. But it is very difficult to close the door again, it's a bit like in the matrix. Once you swallow that pill that's it, you cannot un-see what you have seen because you realize, "Oh my gosh, this so much more part of myself than I actually would like to be part of myself."

□ I think that for me as a white Western Protestant person too, in talking to other people in an incredibly privileged position, you might ask why would it be in my interests to see this other picture? But it is always in the interests of everybody to see the larger scale of bullying because everybody inevitably suffers. Even the bully who is in the position of power because they have this huge sense of vulnerability, in this very weak position. So I guess even within – yes, through empathy – but also through self-interest. [the others come in with coffee] You did it!

/ But this also means that they actually don't perceive their own reality. Maybe this is, about two different realities, but degrees of numbness to reality.

○ Well, it's ignorance on reality and that's part of whiteness. Whiteness creates all sorts of different ignorances and I like to use it in plural because I think you need more than just one ignorance to blend out these kinds of realities. It's intrinsic to Whiteness to maintain itself and create that ignorance of what it is. So they stay with everything in there. But once you lift that veil and you actually see what it is, then like I said, it's difficult to put it back on and say, "I don't want to see my whiteness again." You can do it but it takes on a huge effort.

□ I like what you said about the imagination. That people need the imagination to be able to perceive reality and once you give them a construct, an alternative narrative, it's very... Because the rationale of racism or bullying. "Bullying" as a larger term. Racism, sexism, resource rape, all the rest of it is that we feel the reality of the people being bullied. We feel the reality of our own vulnerability. So all it takes is for the essential pieces of information that have, not a logic but a foundation in fact. And the world does... Then people start to connect. "Oh, that's what they meant by..." And when I saw this person behaving like that, it does kind of filter through. But at the moment, unfortunately, there's a massive global delusion about the situation of power within this human creature that we've sort of divided into different identities and then we use those identities to dominate and rape and...

Incredibly unsustainable, this is... What's going to kill the human creatures is this. I was thinking of people talk about, they're scared that aliens have invaded us already or that they are watching us or that they're using us as farm animals and they're all going to slaughter us. And I was thinking if there is intelligent... If or whatever that intelligent life force that will be looking at humans saying, "Oh, how sad, they haven't worked out how to live within their means." For God's sake, don't let these creatures out in the rest of the universe because this is going to...

It's like, yeah, just wait to see if they survive this level of development. And at the moment we haven't survived that level of development. We don't know how to share. Humans have proved that we are perfectly capable of sharing our resources and there are civilizations, egalitarian civilizations have existed. But at the moment, almost none of our civilizations are sustainable or egalitarian and we might not survive it.

○ Go ahead Divya.

\* Okay. So I think we've spoken quite a lot about authoritarianism. I think we spoke about colonialism. We touched upon Victorian schooling and I think I wanted to go back to this idea of schooling and this thing that we do to one another that makes us social humans: teaching and learning. When we talk about reality... I always think of it as a veil and that it's our task as individual citizens and societies to kind of unstitch or lift that veil and to find the truth behind it. I recently interviewed Tariq Ali and I went to his house and saw a picture on the wall of his study that I can't stop thinking about it. It was a human hand lifting a veil and there was an alien behind it. And I really loved it because I felt true, that your job as a writer or a thinker is to unveil the world and reveal the uncomfortable alien truth behind it, to bring that hidden truth into being.

We humans are mysterious to ourselves. We are shrouded in mystery and we can make stories to hide as well as to reveal ourselves. And so, there's a doing and an undoing of the veil. So, yeah. I've been thinking about reality in relation to the topics I think a lot about, these are storing education and food interestingly and the food we eat. So education, I was thinking... I actually went and looked in the dictionary for the Latin root of the word education comes from. There are two roots. One is 'educare', which means to train or to mould. And then the other one I've heard of, and I realize Italians know to pronounce this better ... is 'educere' or 'educere', meaning 'to lead out.' So there are two kinds of ideas here: to train or to mould, or to lead out. And I think that's interesting in itself.

○ It is.

\* This idea-

○ Just the parent is here in French, it's 'formation' and that actually means to form. So, education means to then form someone.

\* To form. And there's also this-

□ Moulding.

\* Train or to mould. Yes? And here as well to mould and to lead out. I was actually thinking which is more frightening these days for me. 'Moulding' would have been very frightening to me back in my twenties.

But this 'leading out' is more frightening to me now because I think it would lead... this idea of leading away from yourself into the system, which is what we do to one another, and others have done to us. Anyway, the reason I'm thinking about this a lot is because I'm working on a novel about a 17-year-old student of colour.

○ Mm-hmm(affirmative).

\* I'm working on a novel about a 17-year-old student of colour... A young woman who kills her English teacher and the story questions canonicity, cultural taste, gatekeepers as well as what it means to teach and learn. I'm writing about it because I've just always been interested in knowledge construction and the power relations behind what is deemed worthy of being taught and why. I guess when you think about these things you always come back... because we all know, we've all read Foucault from time to time. Foucault's perspective is that teaching could be regarded as an exercise too open or concealed in power relations. So, the master possesses psychological, social and physical power. He can reward or punish, exclude or promote and his authority can be institutional or charismatic or both. And it can be sustained by promise or menace. Then I guess in that conception one would align someone like me with this idea of counter culture, a person who considers canons of formal knowledge and scientific research as strategies of exploitation of racial class domination.

It's *how* we teach and *who* we teach. I'm always questioning those two. To what political end am I doing this or is this occurring to me? But then I've been also thinking of *modes* of teaching and I guess that's why I was looking at the root term of what education means. So again, I go back to this idea of training or moulding/leading out or, wait, leading out for me, leading away from and how... How can one teach with love and compassion? And teach what to what political end to who? It's always a question of extreme concern for me. I sometimes feel like I can kind of be un-teachable. But of course, we're all teachable because I've learned the language and ways of being socially acceptable, ways of being within this space for example. But I think the questioning of the teacher and what teaching means and what it means to be a student is quite linked to how we conceive of reality because we're taught it.

And then this idea of unlearning is important, because we speak about it a lot as writers of colour: de-canonizing and learning and how to unlearn what we've learnt as well as using what we have learnt to make a valuable contribution towards... unraveling it all so that we produce politically aware works for society. So, I think about that a lot. And I think about reeducation as training, as moulding, leading in as opposed to leading from... And then if I think of Victorian education, I do think it is a leading out into a... Well, it's what we've spoken about, isn't it? A sense of leading out from wholeness to an idea of love that is conditional. And it's what we do to whole cultures and communities...

So anyway... This is just one of the things that I've been thinking of and these are just ideas to riff off. But I also... another thing, when I think about it is... Rajeev and I had lots of arguments about food and vegetarianism and I know that Mutlu perhaps you have as well lots of conversations about this.

So, I think it's a very interesting topic in terms of reality, what we're taught about meat is completely divorced from the reality of how it's produced. And I think it's a great way. And of course, this happens to so many products, but I think my focus on this, I think for a number of reasons, just this idea of how it arrives pre-packaged in supermarkets and we don't think about the reality of its production or how far it has travelled.

We speak about this also in terms of the other sorts of foods we eat. Vegetables and legumes and things and dairy as well, it comes with this vision of happy cows chewing grass in fields, when in reality the milk we're drinking is a blend of different milks from different cows, others that have been chemically treated and have diseases in them that have been, sort of, treated and that's what we're drinking. And I think it's really interesting that we're sort of... And then also I guess one of the realities that I fundamentally must acknowledge because I am here as a writer, was born in Gujarat, which has a high Hindu population, who are... And Modi comes from there. And so vegetarianism is extremely political as a topic and it means that you are in that conception is anti-Muslim, anti-white really because it's... An anti-Muslim I would say more than anti-white because actually, this not at all is the worship of whiteness in India and Gujarat as well.

○ So Gujarat is a vegetarian region in India?

\* Well, no it's not.

○ Oh, no?

\* No. There are Muslim communities who eat meat and others who eat meat.

) Well, the majority of Hindus are not vegetarian.

\* The majority of Hindus in India are not vegetarian.

) In Gujarat-

\* And it's an interesting topic because when I spoke about growing up in England, you align yourself with this kind of hippie movement. Sorry to call it that, but a sense of the art student wants to be nice. And then you're aligned with a kind of a benevolent whiteness, a kind whiteness when in fact the origins of the cultural vegetarianism that I grew up, I feel is rooted in violence and hierarchies and Brahminism, whether you're Brahmin or not, within the cast system, but have a sense of aspirational Brahminism and purity. Ideas of purity, which then link Islam to impurity in this.... And I speak very openly about this because it's really what's happening in Gujarati in India right now and across the world.

So, the idea of food as political and how we depoliticize it. And then also bringing it back to love and connection and the idea of the mother's or the kitchen as a sense of powerhouse of a possible connection. So I flipped it around there.

What else was I thinking about? Yeah. So, I wrote fiction, but I did spend one year being what I believe is interestingly evil. I spent a year working in advertising.

○ Interestingly evil.

\* Evil. So I flew to 13 different countries with big companies like Proctor and Gamble and such and such.

/ So you were really serious about it actually? You were seriously working in advertisement. It was not a student job that was-

\* No, I spent one year after and it was completely a very immoral profoundly interesting space. I think the advertiser on this level is like the arms dealer in a sense that you're really kind of operating in a space of globalizing capitalist immorality and-

So, what did I want to say about that, is really important and links back to education. And I think that... So I'm not making, please understand me when I'm saying I'm not making a distinction between schooling, we organize schools that we send our children to and what's happening in advertising is when you say, "I want to educate these people away from buying cloth diapers." These women, these mothers, and I want to make them buy Proctor and Gamble nappies that are bad for the environment because I want to get them as addicted to this idea of what motherhood is as they are to their phones. And the language of propaganda and of advertising is veiled and makes things sound nicer.

And so what they were speaking about, is we want to educate this population, we want to educate. And so the idea of education as subjugation, and then you... Advertising is neocolonialism as a reeducation model of a people, that's extremely powerful. Is something that interests me and I can say for definite, it kind of plays with your sense of one's own boundaries and the boundaries are probably... I know how easy it is to do. So, these are just things I wanted to throw onto the table to talk about. Mutlu looks like he just needs to leave because-

○ No, no, no, no. No, not at all. Actually, I find it really interesting how you make that connection between conditioning and that subjection to a certain culture, to a certain power dynamic and which is also related to... And the consumption of meat. I do consider myself a part-time vegan if I may say so. But at the same time, I realize how deep this conditioning of consuming meat and is in my family and is in the culture that I was brought up in. And I also found it really interesting how you spoke about education or how it is perceived as moulding or as bringing somebody out from somewhere.

\* Leading out of a person.

○ Yeah. Leading out of something of somewhere. When I do my training, it is a form of teaching and I would consider myself more a midwife though, where I help people to give birth to different ways of perceiving reality.

Particularly themselves, of perceiving themselves. And especially when we talk about empowerment, I see empowerment as self-determination, where you actually learn to free yourself from this cultural or from this political or maybe even familial conditioning of how to act, how to be, what to be, what to consume, how to feel, how to orgasm, whatever. I don't know.

\* Yeah.

○ Yeah. To put that out there. And to kind of just learn to free yourself from these things that we have been subjected to, from a very early age, from the beginning of our life. And it's not easy. It's not easy and it takes a lot of time to free yourself from things that you learned when you were already two, three, four years old. It's a very long process. But at the same time, I do believe in self-determination. At the same time, I do believe that we have a free will and that it is possible to overcome all the social conditioning, all the social subjection's that we have been subjected to-

\* Do we not want to live in societies? Do we not want to be conditioned to a certain level? Sort of, we don't want to be foraging around forests-

○ I think we've come back to Ubuntu, sorry if I interrupt you, I think we maybe come back to the Ubuntu like... Yes we want to be free but at the same time being free doesn't necessarily mean I can have the freedom to destroy the social fabric that keeps us together or I have the freedom to say, "I try to fix it." I think that's the part of self-determination that you're talking about.

/ This reminds me of something that I have read: When we look at productivity in the factory making business, the end of it is always, of course, to have in a certain amount of time, more products, more money, whatever. That's what raising productivity means. But there is another idea, another concept, developed by the psychoanalyst Erich Fromm. He calls it character-oriented productivity. He proposes that the industry should be organized in a way that we produce things in a manner that deepens and develops the personality of the workers. And I think this is connected to education of course. Because how education is organized in the Western world in general, but specifically also in Germany where I come from is always a preparation for the labour market.

So, this is what you hear from a very early age on. You need this because you need a job later, and you need to earn money to have a living. And actually, there are programs now in school and then in university how you can combine your studies, your education at school and your studies in university with companies, with market action, so that you learn not only the theory but also can practically use what you have learned. And the purpose is always to be ready for the labour market, which would lead of course to more productivity but not necessarily to a character-oriented productivity. This is maybe also because you asked to teach what? To what political end, and the political end now - at least this is what I observe - seems to get the kids ready for business, to get ready for, say, a capitalist way of living. Whereas another way, another reality could be to get ready for a society where everybody tries to free him or herself, but stay still connected to the other.

A while ago, I was reading Stephen Greenblatt's on... And I think he was talking about the first movements of colonialism from the West. The enlight... Sorry, the enlightenment wave of colonialism. And he was speaking about power and how power perpetuates itself. And one of the ways in which it does is that it contains a rebellion within it. So, when we speak about, and I was thinking as you were speaking about schools, private schools that have little lessons on how to be happy and they teach a little bit of meditation along with skipping along the side, alongside this hardcore kind of a worldview that's contained in this ideas of elitism or how to get into this. And I was thinking that definitely how certain radicalism is contained within the systems of school.

Realism is contained within these systems of school to enhance that system and make it stronger, how it can't be completely I guess fascistic in its organization, how it needs to do that and what truly radical modes of education look like. And then I was also thinking about the master-disciple relationship in all of our ancient cultures of how we pass things on, and how important that is as well as dangerous, and also important. And I was thinking of a Vipassana meditation retreat, and how there's a sense of this meditation technique being passed on to pupils by masters, by teachers as a way of keeping it pure, and to pass that knowledge in its purity onto future generations. And so then I was thinking about teaching and learning just in its essence, away from today's political...

And I guess I'm thinking of someone who holds the knowledge, how they transmit it to the other person and the ways in which it can happen. And we've spoken a lot about bullying or authoritarianism and aggression. And then also you've been speaking about conceiving of it as a midwife or in a different conception of giving birth to different. Someone spoke to me as... I just see myself as pointing a finger saying perhaps look at that, perhaps look at that. But that's it. And I remember also because I do think about teaching and learning a lot. And Rajeev and I discuss Buddhism quite a lot, and there's this saying, "If you see the Buddha walking down the street, kill him because you're taking..."

□ Can only be a false illusion of enlightenment because it's a process rather than a goal.

\* And I think it's always... I always think about, and I do write about, and I do think about it, the story of Ekalavya in the Mahabharata, where Ekalavya is from a tribal community. You can tell me if I'm getting it wrong Rajeev, because he knows them off by heart. But he's from a tribal community and he wants to become a great archer, and he goes to the best teacher in the land, Dronacharya, who's a Brahman teacher, so the top cast Brahman teacher who is teaching Arjuna, the great prince, archery. And he has a vested interest in Arjuna becoming the best archer in the country. But Ekalavya has the will and the desire, but the Dronacharya rejects him. So Ekalavya makes a mud statue of Dronacharya, prays to it and learns archery himself.

) He's watching the lessons from the wall.



\* He watches lessons from the wall...

) Secretly.

\* Secretly. But he teaches himself. So he watches and secretly teaches himself. And then he becomes a fearsome archer. And one day Arjuna and Dronacharya, the Brahman teacher, are going through the forest hunting, and Dronacharya observes a dog who's barking. And to stop his barking, some archers shot lots of arrows in his mouth. It's very cool when you're little and you hear this story, and it sounds like, wow, this archer is amazing. But with great skill and precision and magnificence, shuts the dog up. And he wants to find this archer. He finds him and it's Ekalavya, and Ekalavya reveals himself and he says, "Who are you son?" And he says, "My name is Ekalavya. I'm a tribal. And I came to you, you know me. I came to you once and asked if you would teach me."

And Dronacharya said, "Yes. I said no." And he said, "So how did you learn?" And he says, "Well, I watched you, but also I created a statue of you, and I prayed to you. And this is how I learned." And Dronacharya says, "Well, being as you are my student without me agreeing to teach you, I now demand my teacher's prize." It's a very important thing in the I guess Hindu culture, gurudakshina, which means the teacher's gift. And his gift is that I want your thumb. And without thinking twice, Ekalavya chops off his thumb and gives it to his teacher, which then disempowers him as an archer. This is his thumb that he uses to...

) Left-hand.

\* Yes. So I'm thinking of this devotion to the teacher that's passed on culturally in every culture because the teacher holds the knowledge. So there's this devotion. And I'm thinking of the questioning student and to what extent are cultures and communities against students and what sort of students get taught. And then I'm also thinking about withholding knowledge. I guess I'm thinking of withholding knowledge, and it's an area that I think that not many people talk about, who's withholding knowledge and in what ways to whom.

Because when you're talking about withholding knowledge, I mean you don't know what's... You're usually on the other side. You're usually the person who's protesting so you don't know what knowledge is being withheld. But I think that. Yeah, I guess I'm thinking, yeah. And then linking it back to reality about how education, re-education, whether we can see through its propaganda with what it means, how we pass these gifts on. This is another way of conceiving of education is passing a gift from one generation to another from ancestors. These gifts. I think that's a very beautiful way of conceiving of it, but it also de-politicizes. I don't know. It's magical in a sense and creates who we are.

/ It's connected with tradition as well, isn't it? I mean giving it from one generation to another, certain rituals, certain gifts, certain knowledge.

Even if it's not spoken out, like a certain knowledge that it's not spoken out but you still somehow know things from your ancestors. It's also connected to tradition and not only in a good way, many bad habits, bad rituals, to trauma as well.

○ I have this association of, I don't know if you're familiar with Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy Of The Oppressed* where he talks about how the subject itself, kind of, decides what to teach itself in a way. And yeah, I thought it was a very kind of powerful book and a very powerful notion also how to perceive the student in quotation marks. And I also found it very interesting how you made that link between how capitalism or how neoliberalism always kind of appropriates the rebel or the rebellion... The revolution into its system. And I remember when I went to my supervisor and said like, "Oh I want to write about empowerment."

He was just like, "Seriously?" Because you know that term empowerment is so seriously appropriated by neoliberal discourse. And now when you work in a bank, they will teach a workshop on empowerment and stuff like that. And basically the notion is, similarly to also with mindfulness, how can you exploit yourself even better within the capitalistic system. And I always try, and basically, my supervisor said, "Okay, you want to talk about empowerment, then you have to fight. You have to fight for that terminology. You have to fight to get it back from this kind of neoliberal discourse." And I think the way I see it is, I mean when we talk about racism when we talk about sexism, they disconnect. It is in the system too, with these isms, with these power structures, they disconnect us from each other.

And they disconnect us also from our own humanness in a way. Because in racism and sexism, there's always the dehumanization of the person that is oppressed through these power structures. And at the same time, and I don't know... This again is linked to my spiritual tradition where we say our humanness is in our counterpart. If I deny humanism, my counterpart, I deny it to myself. If I allow humanness in my counterpart, I also allow it in myself. And yeah, I think that is... I'm not quite sure where the connection is with reality and the things that you said, but there is some connection there.

□ Well, when you're talking about also being able to find reality, so if we have a lot of false narratives, a lot of propaganda, a lot of conditioning, how do we find our own reality? And reality is inherently individual because of course, we all have a subjective view, but I wanted to make a point about... You're talking about education and knowledge. And lucky I grew up with educationalists, like four parents all dealing with educational theory. It was pretty intense, hence I didn't go to university. But one thing my mother taught me was she liked to have the impression, and I hope I give that to my children, is to teach them how to learn, not to teach them information, but to teach them how to learn. And so that they know within their character, like you were saying at the beginning about the first thing you learn is about yourself because you can't... As soon as you learn how to learn, you understand your own... And also the character thing of like, okay, my character is like this, therefore I will learn like that.

And that's completely different for everybody depending on their character and their situation. And now we're at an interesting point for humanity because yes, knowledge has always come through in every culture. There is someone who imparts knowledge. And I see that very much as an exchange as well rather than a master and a student. A good teacher will always learn from their students.

★ Or a teacher will always learn from the students no matter what.

□ Right. Now we have this unusual situation that we have internet. We don't need teachers as much as we used to. There's not the same monopoly on knowledge.

) Or elders for that matter.

□ Or elders. Right, right. And I was thinking of the human creature is not just a creature across all of our cultures and all of our geographies, but also through all the generations that built us up with the knowledge to that point. And even in the information that we find on the internet isn't just the one person who thinks that they've come up with this genius idea. They've come to all the generations to get up to that point, and that knowledge is going to come through it. And if we are empowered to find our own knowledge, then everybody has a better chance of coming to the reality amongst all the false narratives that we're being bombarded with in order to be bullied and controlled.

) There's this thing about this cultural appropriation, which I think is a very misunderstood term. Or this if education is the leading out, then what it really, you speak about this fictitious universe that has been created through neoliberal paradigms and aggressive expansionist, colonialist paradigms, or the rhetoric of whiteness. And it's kind of leading you from yourself into these other people's strange visions of the world. You enter Dick Cheney's view of the world and that's sort of what education does. It takes you into this, but then within the things that I've learned in life have been through moving insight and learning things in an authentic way, looking within. And then everything that I've learned from the outside, the meaning changes completely. Once I understand myself and I start to look at myself, then all the things I learned at university, they're no longer things I'm just reciting.

They become things that I can actually have an opinion on because it's being filtered now through the only actual reality that I'm aware of, it's my own reality. And I have to filter everything through that reality first. But then when you take things that are authentic like this phrase, 'self-care', that probably comes from Audrey Lord, or mindfulness you said, or empowerment. These are all authentic important concepts. And then you lead someone out to them. So actually it's somebody else's conception of what these things mean. And they're mindless. This kind of corporate mindfulness is... I've obviously had some brush-ins with it. It's completely meaningless. And all this corporate empowerment or... even self-care means buying a load of products.

□ Sustainability gets thrown around mostly on Twitter. If someone's talking about, not someone, if a company is talking about sustainability, I can be pretty much 80% sure that it's about greenwashing.

) Yeah. But I think, can I just finish? What I was saying is if a person is unable to understand themselves and if education is actually actively preventing that or authoritarian... The shadow of the teacher is the, again the authoritarian, like the shadow of the leader, then... I forgot where I was going to go with this. Yeah. If you're not able to understand yourself or to be authentic, then all that you have is this. And that's I think probably true of most people, I think.

\* Can I say two things before my head explodes? The first is when we speak about the internet as a teacher, I think we also need to speak about its shadow, which is the truth of it is... Well, a truth of it. Well, we need to talk, well I mean we are all talking about anyway data harvesting and how actually one side of it of what's happening is that our search engines are being mined for information about ourselves. And then, I mean obviously, that's I guess... So to what extent I guess is the internet against students and these technologies against learning in a sense-

) Fake news.

\* Fake news. Disseminating kind of things. So we have this kind of controlled environment in which we are seeing ourselves as free students of the internet, and at the same time we are being studied and to what political ends? I just think it's very obvious, but then at the same time, we slip in and out of knowing what we know. And yet we know when we partake in it. And it's an unusual situation. And again, it's not unusual. Sorry. I feel like it's a very usual human condition, and I link that very much to I guess when we talk about the meat industry or food industry. We kind of know things and don't know, and I guess it's part of who we are as humans now.

And then the other thing I wanted to talk about because you mentioned Audrey Lord, I was reading her. And I'm also reading this witch book, becoming a witch, Audrey Lorde talked about kind of an erotics of being. And in this witch book, she was talking about making love to reality. And I thought it was a really interesting thing and it made me think of Audrey Lord and how we in a sense conceive of reality is interesting because we kind of conceive of it in this rational intellectual way. Whereas our beingness in this now is magical or can be conceived of as more than this intellectual space, more than this dry kind of cold dynamic that we have with them.

) I was going to say, but it seems increasingly that this seems to be happening more in the last 10 years, like this emergence of the hipster. It's people who are deliberately imitating something else in order to be more authentic. This didn't happen before. This wasn't a problem in the '70s, or maybe in the '80s. Maybe the '90s. It began that the authenticity became this sort of longed-for thing that nobody... It's probably truer of white people than other people, but probably true of all of us as well, that people can't seem to get their hands in it anymore.

People don't know how to be authentic. They're just being drip-fed stuff, and it seems to be getting worse. And people are losing the ability to connect to themselves increasingly, it would appear. I don't know.

○ I think capitalism basically is going to destroy itself, and I think these are maybe where we see how deep this deformation of power is destroying society, is destroying individuals, is destroying the planet that we live in. I mean it's also like when you think the critique of racism or if you think the critique of sexism and other isms, to the end you always end up with critiquing capitalism because there's so much interlinked how this economic system creates exclusions and inclusions and the inside and the outside, et cetera.

/ I think it's important to underline that it's interlinked and not to identify one root cause because that happens often that the root cause is capitalism and that's where then racism comes from. But it's not because actually racism was created before capitalism. But it is all-

\* And patriarchy.

/ Yeah. Patriarchy is much older than capitalism. But it's, of course, all interlinked. And this brings me to something that I was thinking of when you were talking about your short career as an advertiser. I was thinking of an economist, Karl William Kapp, a German economist, who was the first person to write about social costs. So he actually invented the term 'social costs'. Before him there was a British economist who was talking about external effects, but Kapp was the first guy to say it's more than something that you can have a price for.

Social costs are much more than that. In his book he's talking about different types of social costs. One is the environment, and we didn't have climate change at that time. But still, he was saying well there is an effect on the nature and this will cause huge damages and then different types of social costs. But actually, the worst social costs, in his view, are the social costs that occur because of advertisement. Interestingly, we don't talk about that in the discourse of human rights impacts of business... I think this is, because it's too much in the heart of how the market works right now. So we can say, "okay, we shouldn't destroy the climate because then we will also destroy capitalism." But what we are not talking so much about, at least in the human rights frame, about advertisement. But this is where the reality actually, or our perception of reality, gets changed completely.

) You used the phrase 'climate change'. And even that is another one because Dick Cheney switched it. It was global warming, and Dick Cheney said, "No, we can't use that term anymore because it's too... So we're going to call it climate change." He switched inheritance tax to death tax, and then everyone voted against it.

\* The terms we use and the way we focus on certain modes of-

) Just take over.

□ Yeah. And that's the narrative and the language that we use that gives us that imaginative construct or not.

\* But can I also speak about what's happening with democracies across the world at the moment? And people are talking about Cambridge Analytica and other companies who are using data harvesting. I mean they're basically using the mechanisms of what advertisers have been using years before to mass propaganda people and to push what they call swing voters from one side to another on the internet, in terms of using Facebook and other kinds of.... And so this is not new. And I think the people who are involved in this, in exploding of democracies, it feels like, across the world... Or which has never... The democracies that are deeply imperfect in these countries anyway, they just see themselves as using the mechanisms of the market and doing it in a more... Well, I don't know how they see themselves, but just doing it very efficiently by using the techniques that advertisers have been using for years, and that it's just becoming much easier through internet.

○ Wasn't there also recently like all the data of the Ecuadorians just released on the internet, everything that was digitally collected from the whole nation? I mean the whole people. Somebody just put it onto the internet.

□ And this is a funny thing if I ever get paranoid about, which I regularly do, about what you're researching and who's working out what you're researching and whatever, everything has its shadow side. But also Cambridge Analytica is analyzing us, but we are also analyzing them. And the nature of internet is that everything swings back or has a flip side is that through internet. Yes, everyone can get information from us. But more than ever before we can get all kinds of information to get a bigger picture that was never possible to us before. And information that would be harmless in itself, like harmless for the people who have something to hide, but now we have the ability to build a bigger picture that we couldn't before.

\* And then I'm also still... So thinking about Steven Greenblatt and to what extent we are the rebellion that's being contained despite conceiving and conceptualizing of these ideas and doing fuck-all to change it, or being unable somehow because the power is so big and diffuse. The power is diffused these days. I think when we speak about power... it's not concentrated. How it works is it's sprawling and mass and quite quiet. And I think it's subtle as the air around us. It's quite, I feel like power is a-

) Well with this rebellion thing, sort of a contained rebellion of this in the '50s it seemed to be... There's this concept of the teenager was created by advertisers basically to exploit a teen market. And then you've got what's their name, Marlon Brando and James Dean and so on. They had this very cool-

□ Rebel without a cause.

) And the Wild One and all this stuff.

\* Holden Caulfield.

) Yeah... But there was maybe something a bit less cynical about Holden Caulfield than there was about the sort of very glamorous Marlon Brando and James Dean and so on. And then you've got counter cultures emerging, hippies. This is kind of quite a middle-class phenomenon, but it was nonetheless, it created... The protest against Vietnam was a pretty significant thing, I think. And Black Panthers and various other things. And then it continued. And then you've got the '90s where counter-culture seemed to be getting depressed. And then you've got the next generation where it wasn't even depressed anymore. It just seemed to become extinguished. And now you've got these very cynical teenagers who don't feel they have any means of rebellion at all. It's as if it's been completely not only contained but exterminated, and you just got these hipsters.

\* You have the hipsters, and at the same time, you have students in Hong Kong rebelling, fighting. It was interesting because Rajeev and I were living in Hong Kong-

) But the protests are partly for capitalism.

\* Yes, they are.

□ And also there are theories that there's the involvement of like-

\* Triads.

□ No. China has played a very clever geopolitical game in the last 20 years where the Western world has not, and this is frightening for the Western world. And therefore anything about China that is somehow weak or could be perceived negatively is of course expanded upon and exploded within Western media. So I'm not saying the Hong Kong protests aren't real, but I am always extra cautious about what comes from our Western perception of what's actually going on because it's of course in Western interest to put anything negative about China, irrespective of how negative China might be if you make it sort of simple.

○ There are two things I wanted to say though, but I'm not quite sure how disruptive it is going to be. One thing is that I think also maybe we... I'd like to get away from that notion that every revolution has to be loud and like an explosion. I think a revolution can also be very slow, very quiet, but take maybe a long time, maybe like 100 years or something like that if you still have a planet by that time to live in. The other thing aside of believing in slow revolutions, I was wondering if you should continue with the presentations.

) Yeah. I was thinking that too, Carrie.

- As much as I love being stuck with you in this bunker, I want to get out.
- / Maybe we should have a brief organizational discussion because at some point we got to eat.
- ) I think we just keep going until we can't take it anymore.
- / Okay. So we don't take a lunch break. We keep on and then we eat.
- ) No, no lunch break.
- No, we eat each other eventually.
- \* Actually, I did want to add that in my conversation about cannibalism, and I was reading actually just the other day about the history of humans and how sometime between the Neanderthal man and the first kind of homo sapiens, we were killing each other and eating one another's brains.
- ) On that, do you want to go ahead, Deniz?
- / I can. Okay, so I was thinking about eating your brains. We better get the zombies in this somehow... Zombies, aliens.
- \* There's a phrasing when you're doing someone's head in, you say you're doing my head in, you say you are eating my brain.
- / Oh yeah... There's a Turkish saying actually where you say you're eating the meat of my head. My mother used to say it often when I was a child. So yeah... Let me share some thoughts: What I'm often thinking about is really the meaning of time and how we perceive time and what time actually means for reality. Because I always felt like that I have in my private life sort of the misconception of time. Like it's really difficult for me to say what happened first and what happened after that and when did it actually happen. And at some point, I just tried to be okay with that. I tried to see it in a different way, like... "Okay, I have a different conception of time and I have to live through it." And I would call someone after five years and say like... "Hey, how are you doing?" And the person would say, "Okay, who's talking?" And then, "Oh it's you. Okay, but we weren't talking for five years. So that's strange."

But for me, it would feel super normal. It was like... "Okay, we didn't talk for five years, but you were somehow existing in my mind, and I didn't even realize that it's five years. And I was just calling to say, how are you?" And I am thinking about this perception of time, and it actually plays more and more a role in my writing as well. Because usually when you write, when you tell a story, of course, time has a very important role in it. What happened first? What is the backstory and what happens then? What comes out of it? And more and more, and especially in my new novel, I'm trying to mix up the perception of time as it is in my head really. And then I thought like... "When did this start?"



As a child, I remember that I was really bored. I was really bored. I remember this feeling of boredom in my childhood. I mean I'm an only child, I don't have any siblings. I was a lot at home. I didn't I didn't play so much outside. And this feeling of boredom is something that I remember of my childhood. It's not the only thing I remember, but it had a huge impact on me. And I was asking my parents and saying to them "Hey, I'm bored. Should we do something? Should something happen?" And they were saying, "Well you are a child. Think of something. Do something so that you're not bored anymore." And then things happened of course. When you leave the space empty, it will be filled eventually with something.

The only guarantee is something will get in there. And something got in there, in the way of playing, in the way of thinking, of making music. And then the television entered my childhood, and then I remember that this feeling of boredom disappeared actually. And I remember watching TV for two hours, three hours, five hours in a row for many days in my childhood. And I don't want to say that I got addicted to it, but TV really killed this boredom that I was thinking that I suffered of. And then that was the first intervention as you, if you want to say of reality, with my boredom and my perception of time. The second intervention was school. Picking up on what you have said Divya, how does education interfere with me and my perception of time?

And I think the first time I really encountered the conception of a minute, of what is actually in a minute, was at school. Because before that, of course, there was morning, there was evening. At some point, I had to go to bed or something. At some point there was food, but there wasn't the concept of a minute or even the second. And then in school, it was really like... "Okay, we have to be at school at eight." It was even 7:50. "You have to be at school at 7:50. Then we have 45 minutes. Then you have five minutes of a pause. Then we have 45 minutes more. Then you have 20 minutes of a pause." I think this is the time where actually I should have learned what time means, and for somehow it didn't work so well for me. So I know what time is and I know how much time we are sitting here right now talking about reality. But at the same time, I don't. There's like a parallel perception for me of what time actually could mean. And in the 90s, I read a book called *Borderliners*. By, maybe you know it, by Peter Hoeg. Who's a Danish writer. And the German translation of the title is beautiful, it's called *Der Plan von der Abschaffung des Dunkels*.

"The plan of the erasing of darkness"

○ "Abolishment".

/ "The Plan of the Abolishment of Darkness." In English it's called *Borderliners* and it's about three Danish friends at a boarding school in Denmark. And at some point, the main character says, "I realized that they are actually not teaching us things, but what they actually do is that they destroy time. They are killing, they're breaking down our time in little portions. And this is how they destroy our perception of time."

\* Who is breaking down our time?

/ The teachers. The school system. And then they actually start to have a plan against this destruction of their time and they start to destroy all the watches and clocks that they find in that school. And that's the plan of the abolishment of darkness. And this book was published in 1993. I read it in the late 90s, and I really felt like... "Okay, there's something true about that. That this is what almost 13 years of school did to my, or try to do to my perception of time." And when you think about like what a second or a minute means, it is nothing that has to be like that. It doesn't mirror really how you or anyone of us really perceive time. Right? I mean a minute can be endlessly long or an hour can be super short. And at some point, there was the third intervention into my perception of time. The first was TV, second was school and the third one was really this feeling of that I'm losing time. That there's not enough time to do things.

The feeling of, "Wow, what did I do? How did this time pass? Why is it gone?" And this feeling of not being able to, to grasp time. This desire to stop it, to breathe, but you cannot because things are accelerating and they're getting faster and faster. So I was thinking a lot about this time and reality issue and how we perceive time. I don't know how you feel about it.

\* I did a module in modern Indian literature and looking at Indian literature and modernity a long time ago. And I read Ashish Nandy who talks about time loops and this Western linear conception of time as modern, rational, linear, and also historiography as we have learnt it. As this happened in the 1800s, and then this rebellion happened, and that this and what modern Indian lots... But this is just one of the literatures that I learnt, I guess. They often have this modern rational Western. I'm looking at Rajeev because he's written a book with professor Chandra, *Follows His Bliss* and I've just realized it does the same thing in a sense. In the sense that he has this someone who is atheist or modern... considers themselves modern rational intellectual cerebral going back into the village, I guess, this, "I'm being confused by non-Western ideas of spirituality but also time."

And so, one of the things that we were talking about, and I was reading about in Indian history, how do you make sense of the fact that a rebellion happened because a god told some guy to rebel? And how do you write about this happening in a Western rational sense, is that apparition of a god in someone's mind a real enough reason for the rebellion to write about in a history book? And how does that function in historiography. And I think, yeah... This idea of some cultures and communities think of time as circular and nonlinear and pockets of time. As opposed to this kind of relentless straight line from back there to this, like a highway of time. Which I think is very Western, isn't it? So you kind of go, "It's a big truck." And you're trembling along through this hard time highway. Whereas other... And I wonder, I don't know if the struggle is that you're given just one conception of time and reality. That's what I was thinking.

/ A couple of days ago someone told me a story about a woman that didn't know her age. It's an elderly woman, I think somewhere in Turkey. And she simply didn't know what age she was because her parents didn't, you know, note it down. So she had a passport obviously, but many years after her birth and she didn't celebrate her birthday and she just didn't know how old she was. And then she had visitors, and the visitors were fascinated by the fact that she doesn't know and they started to calculate her age. They were like, "Okay, so when did you go to school? What year was it?" And then they started to calculate her age and they came up with the number.

They came up with a number and this smiling woman that had invited them said goodbye with a horrified face after knowing her age. For many years, I don't know how old she is, but for many years until her late seventies she simply never thought about how old she is. It didn't matter. It was nothing she thought about, nothing that mattered. And then those visitors came and said, "But we have to calculate your age." And then, she was horrified by knowing her age.

○ I thought you're going to say she died.

[laughter]

) The thing is the subconscious has no real concept of time. And the trauma is a sort of intervention in time where you... The way I see trauma is like pieces of reality sticking to you like the kind of barnacles on a whale and you can't get rid of them. And so you think you're living in some other time than you actually are and it just doesn't go... It's actually, I say it's kind of healthy to clean off that kind of intervention in time. What was the first thing I said? That was... Yeah, the subconscious has no conception of it. It just doesn't work like that. We don't see it like that. As I understand it, again because of Ayahuasca, but also certain things that I've read, that the soul has no concept of which life you're on apparently. It's just one movement. It's one continuous movement. It's not very interested in life and death and so on. It just goes to the next one. Then it goes to the next one. Just keeps ongoing. And yeah, that's all I-

□ Which is a fantastic concept of mental health. When I was talking to a South African friend about the way – she was saying that the way people deal with mental health is to say that you have problems with your ancestors. Which in a sort of like... so it's like, okay that covers both the conditioned and the inherited aspects. So that the concept of time, it's not just your life, but you are the combination of all those lives that have led up to that point and therefore this lineal thing of our beginning, middle and end of our lives doesn't really-

) Seven generations of trauma apparently is what we all carry.

□ Right, right.

○ I think it was the native Americans, they say... I mean in Western concept when you do like this Familienaustellung, what's called in English again?

- ) It's systemic therapy, you know? Like family systems therapy.
- Family systems therapy. You usually just do three generations, but some first nations, I think in the Americas they say, "17 generations."
- ) 17?
- 17 generations.
- ) That's a lot of time.
- That's what kind of can matter.
- And just like trauma, I think privilege goes back in a similar way. That through... Recently in Germany, there was a sort of saying, there was thought that social classes, your parents, and then your parents' parents, and then they worked out that it's actually beyond that. It actually goes back much before that. And when I look at the privilege in my family, it goes, as far as I know, it, I can trace it back to those points.
- ) But this close measurement of time I think is probably an early 19th century, mid 19th century, quantification. It was a middle-class invention. The new middle-class that emerged was probably the ones responsible for this. I don't think we... And then we've got digital watches now. I guess what any, well... I mean just wearing a watch is relatively new-
- \* With industrialization and also leisure time, time for leisure, was also created, right? It was a construct.
- ) Which has now gone away because now... it used to be that the more privileged you are, the more time you have, and that's disappeared. Now it's how busy you are has become a marker of status. And we were talking about capitalism then you think about just how every minute of our lives now is dedicated towards work.

It's just become this thing. And I don't think it ever used to be like that. Apparently, hunter-gatherers worked for three or four hours a day. Not like... the airport! We were checking-in at the airport, it was four in the morning. We were talking to the woman who was checking us in. She said she starts work at 4:00 AM. She ends work at 4:00 PM. And she says she goes home and gets into her pyjamas. And she said, "That's my life."

And I thought, well that's... Like investment bankers, they're some of the most powerful people in society. I've got a very close friend investment banker. He's in bed by about 8:30 every single day. He's up at like four or five. And then at weekends he can't switch his body clock back, so he does the same sort of a thing. And politicians, they sleep like... They pride themselves on it. Imagine the prime minister, the president who slept eight hours.

I want to think Trump does, but it is seen as a mark of like shame almost. It's become this thing where we've really closely quantified and divided time and then we have to show off about how much we use it, we put in the service of the machine and then that's all.

□ Which is what we were talking about. The position of the bully or the privileged person or whatever the shackles are, perhaps, also not visible to the people who are perpetrating a system like the... There's a case of, a couple of years ago, of a young German banker who went to work for... Goldman Sachs or something... and he died of overwork.

) Yeah.

□ I mean-

) My badminton partner did. Not like... Someone I played badminton with died at 23...

□ Right, right. I mean horrible. And I was also thinking about what you said about time and the importance. We said time is like trying to impose a certain kind of rationality on things. And that when I find history much more interesting when we think about it, and knowledge and education, when we think of narrative rather than dates and numbers and times. And when you were talking about... Oh no, I'm not sure if I can remember, you were talking about we as writers think about this, that and the other, but what are we actually changing?

But I think we should never underestimate the power of a narrative because a single narrative can enable whole genocides. It can also dispel whole myths. Once you give people just enough of a narrative, which is of course, if the narrative is based in fact that you've spent years gathering or whatever, or years of experience. If you give people just enough of a narrative, they then have a framework, which they can hook their own knowledge onto. And I think this is the very, very important thing for writers to do that.

\* I think stories can... They hide and reveal and I guess that's what I think... I guess I'm always questioning whether what's being constructed is-

) But I then I start wondering how important it even is because we have all these subtle narratives and all these counter-narratives and then you get someone like... You get Fox News, or you get Murdoch, or you get... And they just dismissed the whole thing. And you get millions and millions of people believing in narratives that make no sense at all. And then you start to wonder whether all of this subtle [inaudible].

□ Can you unhook your... Your cord is tapping on your microphone that's all.

) My cord is... Oh, I see. I was wondering what that was. Yeah. And then you start to wonder whether all these subtleties are even...

You start to wonder whether writing is even worth it! You're trying to have this subtler more complex way of looking at reality and fewer and fewer people are reading books, more and more people are consuming mass media and I don't know if this is... I think-

\* Types of narratives.

) Yeah, this sort of pessimism about this has been intruding into my thoughts.

□ Ever heard what happened in Germany with Rezo, you know, the blue-haired 16-year-old who said he's going to take down the CDU?... and he goes on, one hour rant and virtually does it. Right? He goes on and rants. He says all this stuff that he's researched, it's perfectly true. Anyone who watches it goes, "Yeah shit. We've all been thinking this for ages and some blue-haired 16-year-old comes up and says it." And that is also just a framing and a narrative also hooked with much research.

○ But in my line of work, I kind of actually let go of the idea of changing people. I think at the end of the day you can only change yourself and then just hope that the change that you are will change reality in some kind of way that maybe you don't even understand yet. But like the butterfly effect, you write something and yeah maybe only two or three people read it or something, but it creates a storm at the other side of the world...

) Because we can't understand causality...

○ Yes, yes. And there was also like when we talked about time, I don't know how familiar you are with the concept of, well in Australia again 'dream time'. But I'm not quite sure if I can piece it together properly.

\* 'Dream time', what's this?

○ Well, this is kind of Aboriginal notion that... I don't know if it is that reality is like a dream that we kind of tap into something like that. I'm not quite sure actually if I can piece it together properly. I do remember a couple of years ago reading something about it. I thought it was very fascinating because it was absolutely different from this Western notion of chronological time that this is linear, I mean it's also related to evolution. We're just gonna... At some point, just evolution is going to take us to some high beings. But then, I mean, I don't know. At that time then you also have the Shoah. You know what I mean? Like is that evolution really and what kind of evolution is that?

\* We have the?

○ The Shoah. Holocaust, in Germany. So that is more like a going back. It's not like... It's like, in terms of civilization, you're going back! You're not going... You are not evolving when you've killed 6 million people.

□ Physicist talks about the time-space continuum as like a perpetually unfolding sock or like... This is very glamorous, isn't it a sock? But more of a spherical, multidimensional kind of construct rather than something lineal. But also in terms of... You mentioned the Holocaust, there's one journalist who has some great information, who has a narrative that I can... She says that since the 11th of September, between six and seven million Muslims have been killed in the name of 'Wars on Terror' which... let's call that a 'Holocaust' now in this bunker – but that *is* a Holocaust that we're not acknowledging. That simply because we have this other narrative ("We're saving women from Islam", for example), the other facts that we're not able to-

) Okay... The sock, I suspect that time is something that only makes sense to us from our egoic materially rooted perspective, I think from the green stuff I began, it probably isn't a phenomenon. It's something that we can, yeah.

\* It's a projection that's linked to ego or sense of self.

) Or what we can understand or what we-

\* What we can... You know this, sorry... In this modern Indian literature kind of thing of this Western rational man... Western, no... This Indian man leaving the Indian village who then goes to the city to become a rational intellectual in the Western mode, who often goes overseas to, say universities like Oxford, and then returns to his motherland and and village and then how this returning creates in him a sense of dissonance which is what he writes about. There's always a moment of communion in these stories where he sees something in the natural world or spiritual world that he can't explain and so he experiences it as an epiphany. Like he sees a kingfisher... a bird in the water and then time disappears. And it's beautiful... Written beautifully because time disappears and he's in the moment. I guess it's about the moment as then the moment becomes all-enveloping, the moment changes and time disappears.

So I was thinking of that and I was thinking of reading some Freud when I was at uni and him talking about... He talks about if I could access how it feels to be a child at play where time disappears as artists, or as writers, or whatever when you're in the moment of creative work you're actually in it... You're not... Yeah, your egoic kind of self disappears or... And you don't... You're in the thing or even when you're watching TV when you're a child or even now if I'm watching, I disappear and I'm in something, I'm in the story and that then plays... ruptures... Our sense of what time is, and is that linked to egoic self? So then perhaps this idea of time as we see it in daily life, in this Western rational, lineal mode.

) Also, Deniz's boredom is linked to... What is boredom?

\* What is boredom?

□ The point before we learn something?

○ I think the point we get before we get creative, especially. I mean, they say that boredom and creativity are so intrinsically linked to each other... and that... Especially through the internet, shadow side of it, you can entertain yourself constantly.

) Apparently, boredom is disappearing in the end.

○ It's disappearing! And with it, it's disappearing creativity because you need that moment of sitting down for hours and just thinking, "Oh crap, what do I want to do?" And I do remember being bored as a child a lot, which actually made me a writer, a creative writer. Because it was just... I just was just like, okay, I just need to create something now! And I use my imagination and sometimes it'll just fit on paper. Sometimes it wouldn't. But-

/ I remember that I couldn't wait to learn writing because I wanted to write my life story. I was like six! Because I was so bored and I wasn't allowed to watch TV at that time. And later, when I was nine or 10, when I was allowed to watch TV as much as I... Well it wasn't allowed, but then I could watch TV as much as I wanted to. This disappeared for a period, that's true.

□ Entertained.

\* There's something about the active way we use the internet that's really boring and passive and I guess they speak about passivity a lot with how we scroll, isn't it? But that-

□ Depends if we use it passively, that's the thing. I think.

\* There's a positioning.

□ Well, I think there's... It's like a... Whether you are following a specific thing or you're trying to remove yourself from boredom. I think if internet is used from a point of interest, so you've passed that point of boredom said, I need to find out about something or I want to engage in something and then I go onto internet, or it's that you're in that uncomfortable state of boredom and instead of getting creative, you let yourself be washed over by all these multiple sorts of passive bits of useless information that may or may not result in anything.

) Which isn't even boring, the scrolling isn't boring. It's just unpleasant, but addictive and...

[laughter]

□ Then hours go.

) It makes you unhappy, but you can't stop doing it, which is the mark of addiction! Or is it a temporary sensation of...



You pick up your phone and, "I just won an award!" But no, you didn't just win an award because you didn't get an email from your agent. Instead of that you just blah blah blah. There is maybe a second where you think you're actually going to get something from your phone, it's going to give you something wonderful something... But it doesn't.

Although you can... Oh, okay... Maybe this is an excessively trivial thing: I was about to start talking about dog videos... But I wanted to say... Well, okay, maybe it's not... Okay, what I wanted to say was that when I actively looked for dog videos to make myself happy, that's not boring or unhappy making. I have a really good time... That's what I wanted to say.

□ Well, I guess then if you've made the decision that you want to look at dog videos, then you're automatically being more active about it. But if you stumble across a pop-up, that's like dog videos and you go, "Oh, Oh Whoa I like dogs."

\* What is boredom a felt experience in the body? What was it for you in the past?

/ Maybe on patience, because it's... I think it's very difficult or very hard to accept this moment when you have nothing to do... No siblings to play with, no TV, no... And at that time there wasn't any internet. To bear this moment, to accept that there's nothing that you can do right now, you have to find something to do, of course... I mean, you can draw a picture, you can... I don't know, sing a song, whatever, invent a dance. Actually all those things... These are all things that I've done at some point. But time felt very long, I think that's it! It may take only five minutes! Your parents are gone, nobody's there, and you sit there for five minutes without internet and TV and you cannot read because you haven't learned it yet, and what are you going to do with those five minutes? Either you have an answer to that or those five minutes are going to be super long.

) That is where creativity comes from. I remember... Because I just remembered something that I used to do, I used to draw ant armies! And I'd stick all the pieces of paper together until I had hundreds of them. And my ant army... And I'd do like countryside where the ants were passing and my ant armies would like go on for hours... It's was pretty cool! But at the time I decided I didn't have any reason for doing that, I'd Just do my ant armies! But maybe people don't do ant armies anymore... I don't know, maybe they can just have a virtual army on their phone.

/ Well, we were talking about narratives and writers a minute ago and you know about you creating an ant army when you were bored as a child. And I wonder if there's a lesser desire for fiction today? You can see that there are more and more autobiographical books or self-experience books like this, and I hear more and more people saying, "Why would I read a novel?" I want to read the reality! And there are reality shows and stuff like that that I don't know much about.

□ Which are constructed narratives.

/ Anything you write down is constructed, right?

□ Right. So it's still telling a story.

/ It's still telling a story, but there's this notion again that it's real and not fiction. And I wonder if this is linked to the fact that the empty time, the time for boredom gets erased.

) I think this might be a good time for Carrie to go ahead.

□ Oh right. Okay.

) I'm just saying because I think people are getting hungry and if you've presented then we can control.

\* Can I say one more thing because it's just been humming in my head... I read a really good article by a black woman who spoke about... feeling not at home in her body due to experiences of... daily experiences of racism, and how these experiences made her feel in her body. She's coined the term 'epistemic homelessness', a feeling being 'not at home' inside yourself. And I was thinking about this felt lived experience, of how this dissonance between one's reality and what society says is true offers to you, and then how you experienced the reality of time differently and how you felt like writing your life story age six. And I'm just trying to link these kinds of experiences of just not feeling at home in a reality? Not feeling at home in reality, yeah. I think that maybe ties up with some things that Mutlu was saying earlier. Before we speak about oil, having thought that so.

□ Yeah, I was just thinking of the... I think I've said a lot of what I wanted to prepare anyway.

) Yeah, I thought you had.

□ But there's one thing that I wanted to... We were talking about capitalism, and sexism, racism, there's this term patriarchy which seems to become quite gendered, and I wanted to bring back correct to the beginning what you were talking about, the personal journey and so really macro and micro that the human ability to bully – which everybody has – is the projection of fear. So there's a deficit. Will I lose power? Will I gain resources? Will I somehow control something? I project the fear and I start installing. So it comes from a very deep personal deficit and then can become quite systemic. And I wanted to give an example of sort of beyond patriarchy and capitalism I suppose into a sort of a human weakness shall we say or a shadow side of ourselves or something.

And I wanted to, just as an example I suppose, remove gender from the equation and take it to a personal level that I guess most people can identify as that, if and when I've been bullied in my life, there's been no type or group of person that has, more or less, bullied me – often women.

And we associate bullying with something patriarchal and violent and male and... Because it's aggressive. But if we look at the gender spectrum in terms of saying testosterone and oxytocin, I think rather than estrogen, hormones that we can more or less have more or less of through experience as well, not just our born gender.

And if I have more testosterone, then I'm going to be able to abuse my physical ability in terms of bullying someone with physical violence. And Amy Schumacher, the comedian was saying, "Oh, you know... When most women in America were asked what they're most scared of, they said physical violence. And when men were asked what they were scared of, it was ridicule." And then she made a joke saying, "Oh, the little man is afraid of a little bit of wicidule."

Which was bullying in exactly the way... So I was thinking of... Okay, if oxytocin enables us this bonding ability, networking, bonding, communication, connection. If I have deeply personal psychological information about someone, I can bully them with far more violence than if I just donked them over the head, or not far more violence, equivalent violence. So I guess in terms of that, our human capacity to be bullies and to slot into those systems that separate us, to control us and separate us, is a horrible part of humans that we're perpetually... It should be a perpetual conflict: trying to control the projection of fear.

) Yeah.

□ Everything else I think has been said by you guys anyway. Part of bullying in terms of the way we are all part of bullying systems because most of our... I would almost potentially say all of our civilizations are based on more or less systems of bullying, which come from a deficit in that we have unsustainable civilizations. As long as we can't live within our resources, we're going to be bullying other people for them. But part of that controlling or bullying is becoming removed from your physical and your bodily environment. So people who are connected, like when I was talking about indigenous Australians, if you're really connected with your environment and with your body, then someone can't come along with another narrative and say, "Oh look, this is the narrative." And you're like... "No, it's not because I have my body in my environment too!" So you have to remove that and take that away in order to dominate someone. Yeah, that's it.

) I'm just thinking...

[laughter]

\* This is what Guilaine Kinouani, the woman I read... She talks about a term she coined call 'epistemic homelessness'. As I recall, she was talking about being... *feeling* homeless inside your own body, the experience of feeling not at home in your own body as being... Like you're being ousted from your home with the same violence. And she spoke about the violence of, I think, being a mother with a child and being told she must leave her home for certain reasons.

And then the experience... the internalization of that was also feeling being 'not at home' within oneself. And I keep thinking about that over and over again because I think of, I guess, just functioning in the world as a woman of colour and or-

With various things happening to you, when I've had breakdowns in the past I've felt not at home inside myself, which is a horrible, terrifying experience. Terrifying. But it's also a condition many women of colour feel in white society. And then I was also thinking of what you were saying about that term 'projection of fear' and I guess when we speak about reality, I like the word 'projection.' I think it's just a great idea of conceiving of a sense of reality. "Are the realities, projections of narratives and are we stuck inside stories someone else has told us all the time?"

) I was just thinking about this thing about your saying breakdown and not feeling at home. I remember that the very worst day I've ever had in the middle of a breakdown was I just kept driving in my car. I had two houses available to live in. I had my own and then my friend's house that he gave me the keys to cause they were going away. I just kept driving from one to the other cause I was just sort of unable to be anywhere including in the fuck-ing car! So that was quite... There was that. But then I was thinking about this concept of home and just talk about 'First Nations' people and the Hunter-gatherers have one conception, wherein obviously, home is not physical, it's not a definite location. They're wandering around but they have this connection to wherever they are, presumably.

\* The general area where you hunt...

) Well, the general area can be huge for Hunter-gatherers.

□ Like the whole universe... the star system... Like indigenous Australian narratives that are based on constellations so that you can tell a story or a song and know what time of year, day, time, the plant is found in any... Everything is so incredibly integrated within the narratives that extend to the furthest away star that you can see.

) So Hunter-gatherers' home is one, that's not a single location. And then you have agriculture, so then presumably it begins because then you have to stay in one place for agriculture... Or perhaps two places. Settled agriculture, there's the shifting cultivation, then the settled agriculture where you have your granary stores and then you have a kingdom that will grow up around that because somebody will steal the grain and then you have your first human settlements and then that's home. And then you have industrial production, and then you get a nation, which is this creation of this... Which I think huge quantities of problems have started from the creation of nation, I think it's the most absurd and horrific concept for most people. And then that's being dismantled now because people don't belong to the community or nation anymore particularly, and that's sort of being dismantled.

So then where does that end up? And people are really holding onto nation like crazy; it's this irrational concept, that it's so easy to see that nation is irrational and nobody's letting go of it. Including highly intelligent people, leftists, Democrats.

I mean it's not just America, I mean so many super-intelligent Americans you meet and then they say, "I still believe it's the greatest nation in the world." You just said loads of really intelligent things and then you've come out with this bizarre concept! Or are people saying, "I love my country," when you think otherwise they're really smart and why are they saying that? It's weird. It's arbitrary. It doesn't make any sense! And I don't know where I'm going with this, but I'm just saying that it seems that... What my question is, why is nation refusing to go? Do people feel they get rid of a nation and then it's just the void? And then if it does go, then what happens?

□ I was thinking of the case of Germany because it's only been a nation for what, a hundred and fifty...?

/ Since 1949.

□ I suppose from that point of view. And then actually for the last 24, 20, 30 years in terms of reunification. But the concept of Germany-

/ Exists since the late in the 19th century-

□ Quite recent, and yet we think in-

/ 1871.

□ Right. And we think of it as this, "The Germans, the German Nation." But before - "The Germans!" Being German existed before Germany and it existed in behaviour, culture and artists and the way artists reflected...We'd like to identify with things and we've taken something arbitrary like national borders, and administered infrastructures to identify with, but we do need things to identify with and we can find them in many other places as we did before they were nations. Probably also illusions...

) Before nation then. We had big aristocracies, we had churches, we had empires, we had all of this. But then we can't go... Or maybe we are going back to that and I don't think we are. Now we've got corporations and we've got nations and if people are starting to see through both of these things, maybe then what happens is all of this Identitarianism. Maybe that's what happens, maybe that's why white supremacy is making a comeback. I don't know.

□ I think, for me, it's also exactly this removal from body and environment people talk about, almost any group in some sort of strata will be frightened of cultural invasion and cultures develop because we need rules to behave, to survive and that depends on our environments and because we've become alienated from our environments. It's like in Australia there's a perfect example of that, is because you know we've got a very young white culture and 60,000 years of culture before that. And I grew up completely, absolutely alienated from my environment.

I couldn't walk in the bush and even find a plant that I could make a cup of tea from, I mean that is such an incredibly vulnerable situation. So your concept of identity isn't actually... It's useful survival in the sort of contract of economic systems or whatever. But you know, they take that away, I'm fucked!

) I noticed that in America all the time. Even when we went to Utah, it's these amazing rock formations and everything and then you see white Americans wandering around with their fanny packs and Reeboks and they just look like they're in a foreign country. And they could be, they could be in Mexico, they could be in Egypt they could be sort of anywhere. It's this weird... What I wanted to say, but I just wonder if something good is going to come out of this. This disconnection, because I'm finding for myself that I have to continually have to let go of all these identity markers, constantly, because I can't stick to any of them anymore.

And it seems to me that the discourse around all of this simultaneously is getting more sophisticated. Maybe, on the one hand, people becoming more nationalistic and more embedded in race and gender, but on the other hand, you've got a critique of gender, which I don't think has ever been... I've never heard anything like it was happening in the last five or 10 years. I never heard of anything this sophisticated, all of these different words, 'gender fluidity'... I've never heard anything like that or deconstruction of race and nation, I mean, on the other hand, all of this deconstruction could be quite, it is very sophisticated and quite positive perhaps. And maybe that's coming because we don't feel comfortable anywhere anymore.

□ And the point of sustainability – as much as it's thrown around by corporations – all it means is something that you can keep on doing. So if it's something that you can't keep on doing, it will inevitably stop. So we go back to the only thing left, is the things that we can keep on doing and that's connected to our bodies and our environments. And also we're in a position... Yes, we've gone through all this, traumatic experience of industrialization at the expense of the colonized world, but we do have an incredible situation for humanity: that we only get one chance to transform. The planet is at peak everything, peak human, climate... We fuck this up, we've definitely fucked it up for good.

But at the same time, we've got the ability to communicate with each other, we've got a nervous system on the internet – through industrialization because everything has many sides to it. We've also got enough technological development that we don't need to be unsustainable anymore. We actually don't need it! We think there's this sort of common narrative that 'all humans will always invade. Those people with guns, and diseases will always invade,' and it's like... No: those civilizations will always, *always* run out of resources, and we're running out of the planet. That stops with this planet. We don't have another planet. I'm sure the aliens are laughing at us. I feel like, there are many realities that could happen now at this point. Many, many realities! There's maybe a parallel world in which we make it... and one which we don't, or whatever, but I really feel like more than ever, things can go absolutely any way. And then getting surprised, like you say, the kind of discourse that's happening about gender... Like, amazing.

) It's incredible and we're not culturally bound almost for the first time. We can simultaneously not take from or not consume... We can simultaneously practice multiple different cultures all at the same time without even being fetishised. It's not even a thing. We just do it, constantly, and it feels normal, it feels natural.

○ I think the question is, as much as we can deconstruct these things, what do we construct? And we have to construct something. I think we can't just deconstruct and then remain an emptiness that doesn't work. I think something has followed up, we have to create something, we have to reconstruct maybe something that we have lost and we talk about humanity, but what is the human being? How do we understand human being? What is... What do we entail in this human being? And is it just, I don't know... Is it just economics? Is it just pain? Like being not in our body, do we just identify with that?

I think there's a big search there of what does it mean to be human, and how do we understand that humanity and what does it mean also with living in a planet with other beings and plants and minerals and animals and everything. I think there's a huge chance there within this crisis also to figure all these things out.

\* I think ways of being and ways of seeing have disappeared as a result of this greater connection. I was just thinking about language, the colonization of languages, languages that have disappeared as well as different ways of conceiving of reality ... these have disappeared in order to create, as you've been saying, 'great connection.' I'm thinking about reclaiming past knowledge systems or ways of being or experiencing the world. To what extent is that thing connecting us or should we be going on our own paths to find new ways and old ways? It feels like a 'higgledy-piggledy' path, as you say in English.

□ But I also feel in part of seeing ourselves as the product of many generations, I think, just like there are invisible economies that we don't see, there's also information and structures that we already have. And they only find themselves at that moment where we stop the things that are destructive. Humanity is not the sum of this unsustainable, horrific, violent beast. We have all these different facets and knowledge that it still remained and is there and exist in parallel that we don't see.

/ As much as I like this optimistic turn-

[laughter]

) Oh, great.

○ I refuse to put this into the category of optimism or pessimism. I think that's a very Western notion again, to put it in this kind of dualistic term of either doom or happiness. You know what... Even if human beings all wiped out, the planet will still exist, life will still exist, who cares? And our existence is just a blip in that huge tree of consciousness and reality and 'beingness', so you know? Screw it!

/ I want to highlight something else: you say there's a chance in the crisis, but actually most of the people in the world don't have a crisis. There's this crisis that is a product of the Western world. The effects on the planet, the way our economies do work. And if you look at economic models and the models of living together, for instance, in different African regions and cultures, wow, there are enormous answers to that. How to live together, what to identify with. And it's not that we are now in a crisis and now we have to think about how to live and maybe we'll come up with a solution.

No! There were many solutions and they were all wiped out through genocide, through colonialism and through ignorance by saying there's only one story, there is only one truth and this truth. This one story that we actually accept because we feel like that's the one we are talking about, now has a crisis! Okay fine. And there is a chance in this crisis that the Western world can see, "Wow, that was actually the one concept that we were following for 500 years." It's just a tiny piece in all the concepts that exist in Asia and Africa. That's why I wanted to intervene here and say, every crisis has a chance, fine, but this is a crisis of the western world that becomes a problem for the rest (again).

) I think it is most of the people who are living, because India and China combined is over 3 billion and they're all moving out of the countryside and into cities and 1000% embracing capitalism, in ways which I never thought would happen in India. I remember India in the 80s and the early 90s, and now it's totally different. And China too, I mean they built all these cities and nobody's living there, but they're going to live there and agriculture is getting squeezed. And it's just sort of like, what I think of is these societies, it just doesn't exist anymore, and as much as I would-

/ But the concepts do exist... I mean people stopped living like that, it's true. But the concepts do exist! When you study economic epistemologies in Africa, I don't know much of it, but there's this book of Felwine Sarr, for instance, 'Afrotopia' where he talks about some of those concepts. There are some groups that have an economy of solidarity, where actually the community is not organized by how much you can produce, but how much you can give to each other. Which is a completely different way of thinking and living and there are those answers. This is why I'm not trying to-

○ Capitalism critique.

/ Yeah, maybe it is capitalism-

□ When we're talking about time. I would take that back almost, I don't know if it's almost exactly 10,000 years... Around 10,000 years when we're living in larger groups. So I think yes, we are having a crisis of Western civilization and that is the most vulnerable element in our global economies - is definitely Western civilization, as a term. But the actual crisis comes from the fact that humans have not yet learned to live in large groups sustainably...



And when we're talking about colonization, even when Rajeev alerted me to the fact that, India was invaded by the Persians, who I suspect, were suffering the results of unsustainable agriculture in their own or looking for more resources, that's what makes people invade. It's not like humans invade ad hoc, cause it's fun-

) Colonialism wasn't because of a crisis in the European world, exactly.

□ We were running out of shit... Look at the middle ages, we were disastrous in Europe. We were in hellish places, and even like for example, the colonization of Australia, it was literally running out of prisons. But that's what motivated invading Australia.

) But it's also motivated by the desire of individuals to become incredibly rich. I mean, people became... Englishmen became rich by today's standards from colonialism, and you know, I don't know if it was a national enterprise or a civilisational enterprise so much as... There's a lot of buccaneering and adventuring, I don't know.

□ But there was the requirement of resources... A non-sustainable culture, let's say.

) Yeah.

□ But you know, this is the interesting thing... I think, is that the knowledge is there as much as we have tried to wipe it out and there are terrible tragic examples of how we have wiped it out. I think, there is enough knowledge there and more than ever before and we're able to access it and use it.

\* But I was thinking, is the knowledge there? Because I was also just thinking about my baby niece and love and how she experiences it as a child. That children are kind of designed for this kind of system, that this human thing is embedded into us to... Maybe the knowledge is there because of a need for nurture and compassion to grow as humans that is in-built in our system of growth and-

□ And biological systems.

\* That it can't be wiped out because it's encoded within us.

) And then there's this point, there's a multiplicity of cultures who did have sustainable methods of living and they've been mostly eradicated and wiped out. And now we have this one giant dominant, you know what I'm talking about, India and China, they've joined this one giant dominant culture, which is basically a culture of extinction. That's the one big culture that... And it isn't a nurturing, compassionate, love-based culture. It's a culture of acquisition and it's irrational, I mean, I think, it's irrational. It serves its own rationality too, but it doesn't serve a human rationality. So, I can't remember where I was going with this.

\* Isn't it like some sort of an indoctrination by Western capitalism or its own kind of creation.

) I don't even know if we can call it Western anymore.

\* No, capitalism.

) Because of India and China.

□ I would seriously... Just because it's my thesis of the day, but I really feel like it's humans in awkward and dangerous situations behaving badly, projecting fear and creating these things and we have created a monster with... There's many sides to everything. On one hand, we've created a global monster of these systems that we all are part of. On the other hand, for the first time we have a global consciousness and it can access all the old knowledge as well as the new knowledge, access to the generations of knowledge that's led us up to this point.

\* I was thinking about the fact that in all cultures and communities, I'm sure, there are old stories they speak of the outsider coming into a community or into a society and the disruption caused by it, as well as of course some welcoming the outsider. But the fear of the other is always there and I wonder about the extent to which these modern projections, news narratives, are just replaying a very old story.

□ That, and when you said fear, I also thought, we talk about fear because fear is harnessed by anyone with an ulterior motive to bully and dominate or you know... But fear is like pain and it's essential, you know, it's there for a reason: because it teaches us that something is going wrong. And at the moment I feel like when you said it's, I think... I suspect, or, what I feel that I see: is that everybody is very, very scared at the moment. There's a huge global feeling of massive anxiety and I think we all either intuitively or directly with knowledge, know that we're in this situation that we're fucked, unless something big changes. But that's also this chance is that, the pain is there and we get a chance respond.

/ Maybe the chance is then if we all feel this pain and the fear, to stop talking for a minute and to listen to what other concepts do exist out there. Even if the people who are living those concepts are mostly killed. What concepts are there? What possibilities are there? And when all the rain forests were burning, and we were seeing those things on social media, there were people, indigenous groups standing there and saying, "Well, we are here fighting this and we will fight for it as we do since hundreds of years." Maybe that's the time, if there is a chance, actually to listen to those people and ask them what to do instead of constantly telling them what to do.

□ Absolutely, exactly. And it's if you're taking a painkiller, you reduce the chance to identify and work with the cause. And everything that is going wrong – whether it's an indigenous group or a racist radical group – they are our alarm systems that something is going wrong and therefore we have to listen. And again, of course, listen to the indigenous people and what they are saying...

But also when young white men in the army start becoming right wing assholes. And we listen – not to their solutions – but to their perceived fears because they are our nervous system telling us that something is going wrong. And if we follow, for example, the narrative of young racist white men and we find out what are you scared of, what is it? And we find it, it's only then that we can find out what narrative have they been fed, how have they been used?

And in the case of this phenomena that we have of soldiers becoming right-wing and radicalized, we have 18 years of trying to convince people to give up their lives for something that was not real... For a ghost of Islamophobic rage. When in fact, they were going to war for oil so that we can fly in planes and drive in cars. And that's the signal that they're going off in their racist things... We need to listen to them, not listen to what their solutions are, but there's a sign. And when people say in Germany, "Nazis raus!" No, that is not part of me.... It is part of us! We created that, you know... We can't just say "go away." Just because their fingers got an infection, you can't just chop it off!

/ We wish to externalize the problem, to say it's somewhere else, it's not me-

) What were you saying Mutlu?

○ I kind of just want to make a completely different point... Which goes back to the beginning of what you said about, I don't know how you phrased it, but... Love is the connection between consciousnesses, I don't know if there is a plural of that, but create the one now.

) That's the point.

○ I was just sitting here and listening to all of you in this bunker and just being connected to you and to your consciousness. I just felt loved, I'll just share that.

) Very good note to end on, perhaps it is a good note.

○ Maybe you want to say a few words?

) I think you just did! This is what I really wanted to happen... I now realize it may have been foolish of me to think I could guide the conversation away from politics.

Perhaps not necessarily because that is the reality that we inhabit when we're not drinking Ayahuasca! It's good... I feel like we got it all out there. We could probably go on if we weren't so hungry. And I also noticed... My feeling is we did get a little more pessimistic the hungrier we got! I know I did. I definitely did... I felt less full of hope and optimism the hungrier I became.

\* It's interesting though, when your fundamental needs aren't taken care of, how it does change your reality...Needing the bathroom.

○ Brecht said: “erst Brot, dann Moral.” First bread and then ethics? To eat with me and sort of to take it out to share it with love.

/ But maybe this is also one of the messages of the format... As an answer to what is happening these days. Maybe you have to put people in a bunker for many hours so that they start again to connect with each other to talk and listen. Maybe this is one outcome also, of the format that I’m really grateful for... I also really enjoyed listening to you people and talk to you.

) Well I kind of feel that... What I find interesting is that I thought our conversation was relatively, if not, quite a lot non-ideological actually. I thought that was quite interesting. It was dialogical, it was not ideological... It wasn’t people want something this... And they’re saying well Marx says... You know... Nobody seemed to have some kind of fundamentalist agenda or anything... It was a sort of non-dialogical conversation and I suspect that that would not have happened 20 years ago. That’s my suspicion... I suspect it is actually...

We were talking about crisis... I suspect that this actually is a response to the crisis, it’s dialogical and non-ideological conversation and if I could just talk about Ayahuasca one final time [laughter]. Because I did become, in fact, a vegetarian recently. At least, I still eat fish. And it almost felt like it was an intervention from this Ayahuasca, which is now becoming this relatively... Maybe not commonplace, but it’s growing, people have heard of it and so on.

And one of the reasons that I’ve heard is because it’s the plant-world saying, “Look, okay... We’re going to sort this out. You’re really fucking it up now. So we are now going to start talking to you.” And this is why more and more people... It comes from the Amazon, which is obviously in trouble, and it felt like a sort of, an intervention from the plant-world saying, “Okay, you are now not only destroying yourselves, you’re now destroying us! So we’re going to talk to you and we’re going to try and get you to realize that we’re all connected and that you can’t destroy us, because then you’d destroy you.” It just feels like that was almost inter-species communication. And what’s happening is that we seem to be able to have conversations that are no longer motivated primarily by the need to be right, but by the need to actually understand.

★ That’s beautiful. I think Ayahuasca seems like it’s a re-enchantment of reality, of your reality somehow... And I was thinking about how this sort of connection, education as a mean to understand, as opposed to imposing ideas. It’s quite enchanting and nice at the same time.

) Because if we don’t understand then we’re all gone.

○ Thank you so much. Thank you.

★ That’s great bread.

/ If you're still online, Sara, if you're listening, please come to the restaurant.

\* Come eat with us!

) Also, we do have books available too.