Breaking it Down (again): DAY 2

A broadcast by Surfatial, the collective of Satya Gummuluri, Malavika Rajnarayan and me, 16 February 2017. Watch on YouTube

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I made this transcript by machine from the recording and corrected it against the recording's description and my own records. I have not checked the words by ear. I checked a sample of the speaker names by ear, and corrected those I heard differently. [?] marks a word still in doubt and [unclear] a passage that could not be made out. A speaker is named only where the broadcast's screen or the recording's own words say who is speaking. Fillers such as "uh" and "um" are left out. Times are from the start of the recording.

A name followed by (?) was read from the screen at a moment when it changed from one speaker to the next, so the turn may belong partly or wholly to the speaker before or after.

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00:01 HEMANT (?) How's everyone?

00:03 MALAVIKA We're live. Hello.

00:04 ADITYA Welcome to the Welcome to the day two of Breaking it Down (again). We have some people from yesterday and some new participants today. Yesterday we discussed a fair bit about some of the questions around what happens to individual intellectual journeys within collective spaces and also about collective spaces in general or collective practices in general. we also spoke about not to qualify them as collective practices, but more to think about presences so that a presence actually gives you a larger way of thinking how collectivity today would function or work. So some of the things that came about yesterday in discussion was there was one element of secrecy which seems to be one of the conditioning forces that binds a collective together, like there is a kind of a shared secrecy that puts together a collective. And there was a contrasting opinion to that saying that the idea of collective and camaraderie actually works through transparency and not secrecy. So there were different kinds of positions that were part of the discussion yesterday about what happens to individual within the collective space at the same time within the dynamic of the collective space itself. So that is the larger framework within which we were operating our discussion yesterday. So I'm going to build a little bit on what happened yesterday and position the questions today. And some of us are already arguing about the questions, so it'll be interesting to see what directions we take. The first one for today is can individual coherence sustain itself in a sea of presences, what happens to the individual's coherence within a sea of presences, as we understand today.

02:04 SUCHISMITA (?) How are we defining coherence?

02:07 SATYA How would you define it?

02:11 ROHINI (?) Well I don't think it's impossible not to. I mean the question was how I don't know. I mean Can you repeat the question again? Sorry.

02:19 ADITYA Well, k ha can the individual's coherence sustain itself in a sea of presences? We were talking fair bit about the importance of the individual within a collective spaces yesterday and also the individual by itself. And we also talked

02:37 ADITYA (?) Yes, because I think one of the things we took away from yesterday was

02:42 ROHINI You know, an individual in solit in solitude like that. So I would say yes.

02:48 ROHINI (?) But coherence is an interesting sort of

02:54 HEMANT Can we

02:55 Would be sort of...

02:57 SATYA Coming together of an individual as an individual.

03:00 'Cause k is that even possible? Like is a collection that's together and that's moving around as a collecting collection of thoughts, collection of ideas, collection of impressions, whatever it is that makes up an individual and that shifts through space and time.

03:19 ROHINI Well, I feel like the question is really broad unless we sp you know, narrow it down to a particular kind of thing, because otherwise are we is that not the state of things right now in general anyway? We are all individuals, we are hopefully somewhat coherent I mean there is some coherence and then we are within this sea of, you know, a larger thing, which is the collective, society, whatever. So unless I don't know, unless we make it more specific to something, I would say yes, right?

03:48 HEMANT You know I'm actually against kind of this coherence and because coherence is you know everybody's coherent to oneself, you know. and then we some of us who are more socially you know engaged we tend to we tend to you know psychologically unwittingly fall into some kind of what's the word? consensus and I think consensus is the most damaging thing. It's Germans who didn't speak out, you know. And I think I think i it's very good to have your own coherence but then again you would need to be with in some kind of social you know because we are not islands so an example would be that you know our friend taru [?] you know he had his own coherence which wasn't too much aligned with you know w with the with the consensus then and he was going in the opposite direction for a while. And so there they you have a very good example of you know your incoherence you know defined by you know not subscribing to a consensus you know becoming But are you saying are you saying

05:41 SPEAKER 1 Consensus is something that is y that is something that you don't agree with? Is that what

05:45 HEMANT Yeah. I think consensus is i is productive. It brings some kind of order, but then it all it's very dangerous, you know, that consensus can become very small and it can it come it can become insular in the sense that, you know, who will change the consensus?

06:10 ADITYA No, I if we were to qualify what Rohini was saying that we you have to qualify this coherence in a very particular Rohini, we were talking yesterday about what happens to the individual intellectual journeys within a collective practice, right? Yeah. And wh when I meant individuals coherence, partly it comes from there because somewhere the individual is put up in this ambiguous position of not revealing the whole, at the same time con showing that there is a contributive factor within itself. So if we were to think about particularly in a context such as that, how would one then think about it, no?

06:47 ROHINI Well, I think like we said yesterday briefly, you know, that them there will be, I think, some codes and negotiations and strategies within that sea of presences, if you like, where the individuals, however many there are, will have some form of you know, making their voice heard. And then whether that is immediately apparent to the outside is another question, right?

07:08 ROHINI (?) Yeah.

07:09 ADITYA (?) The question.

07:11 SUCHISMITA (?) Yes.

07:13 Because I think one of the things that going by the questions that you guys are raising, I think one of the things that one needs to distinguish, especially with the framework of consensus, is how is a collective different from an organized party? Because the danger of consensus and of a small consensus overruling individual aspirations and individual opinions usually is a criticism of organized party functioning and a collective and inner collective, and the collective is imagined as a space where that sort of that sort of whip will not be accepted. I mean, not accepted is not the right word, but that sort of a whip will be negotiated with, right? So an individual aspirations and the idea of an individual coherence has greater stay in something like a collective, which is not an organized. way of a party functioning, right? Of a collective. Like I think it's an interesting distinction to initially think of how are we distinguishing our s I mean

distinguishing a certain space as a collective. Vis-a-vis an organized formulation where then it is hierarchical, where you have to obey a certain kind of diktat despite your individual disagreements.

08:26 SATYA (?) But Suchismita, do you think that these kinds of things might still arise, even, you know, despite not wanting to have it by n by nature, this kind of problem might still arise even in a collective sort of loose format?

08:39 SUCHISMITA Absolutely. But I'm just saying that sometimes I think the idea of turning to a collective is precisely to look for those new spaces and then and consensus is required. Like as Hemant was saying, I mean, I'm not too sure if consensus is a bad thing and it can't be you can't be pitching coherence versus consensus, right?

09:00 ADITYA Yeah. Yeah. Well in a way consensus we will speak about it later. Consensus is something where there is an active dialogue or off where agreements and disagreements are always playing a part, you know?

09:16 HEMANT Not necessarily you know as a social is i is a consensus you know you know so a Facebook page is a consensus and the if there's slight disturbance you know in extreme cases people are unfriended and all that and I think the this the one thing which I have which I'm kind of intrigued with you know that being heard you know I mean how does one make heard is that when one's coherence you know i is i is larger than or one can objectively test one's coherence because one is into a social because we are almost always in a social like if I'm in a jungle I read books.

10:25 -huh.

10:26 And what kind of books I read, you know whether I become the Unabomber or I become Thoreau these are two socials, you know, two extremes. And so that defines so you know Jesus Christ or Gandhi. Gandhi God knows how many times he was beaten up in South Africa. You know, if you read a book of the Mahatma, I mean he was he was almost killed at times, and you know the people who weren't part of that consensus the white people, they would save him, you know just in nick of time basically. So what I'm saying is that you form your coherence within a within a social, which is within a collective actually.

11:17 -huh.

11:18 And that coherence, how coherent that is then makes itself is I mean you there are there are many ways of you know then you should have the agency to express it, which many people might not have. So many coherences, you know, which would otherwise be stolid and could stand in i in you know, the sea of water would be there and perform a function within but some of the

12:01 ADITYA Are you saying that the coherence somewhere is related to the kind of the agency that one has in contributing to the social if this is what I

12:10 HEMANT Just the opposite that agency and coherence are not related. Some people have you know coherence and they might not be interested in even being heard in the sense that you know it could be it could be a some kind of apathy with a certain kind of consensus around them. So you know the many examples within for example in the Congress party, if you are talking about political, I think Suchismita brought the political party. You know there are there are so many young leaders you know, and the only coherence that is heard is Rahul Gandhi's, you know, or so that's there you are.

13:05 ADITYA That's where that's where I would like to distinguish. But what I'm trying to say is that the whether we are conflating coherence with a little bit of what we could call tentatively a dictatorial kind of approach, right? Which is very different. I mean also not just like collectives as loosely we discussed yesterday about the difference between a collective as and presence, and presence is something much more expansive than to what a collective is. At the same time, we came back to collective because we wanted to have a particular qualitative approach to something. But are we yes, there is a kind of in-built power equation that comes to play in terms of what Coherencies and also who expresses the coherence maybe in the context of

party that you're talking about. But I'm actually more interested about not that kind of hierarchy. I'm thinking about whether we can at all talk about coherence in of the individual anymore.

14:17 HEMANT Is a better kind of thing because social is a better because there are many socials, and sea's a very abstract and rather intimidating, you know. the sea. It's like a herd of some kind of species. And there too, the problem is that you know we don't tend to see individual animals as you know each animal as an individual of the species, and rather we call them a herd or you know as a collective. So somehow and also there's I think if you look at the sea then you know we could be, I mean, I'm just kind of proposing a model of sheep, a herd of sheep where nobody is a leader, and it's just a biomass which is you know. some coheren one coherence can pull it in one direction, basically.

15:20 -huh.

15:21 HEMANT (?) Some kind of survival instinct you could call it or something else. You know, a voice of sanity.

15:30 Or something exciting or some kind of so it could take month [?]. After all, you know, our function is actually as a species to survive. So if you talk about a very macro kind of sea level in inverted commas, then yeah this could be a model, you know, have we as a species and how do we bird with the species? [?]

15:59 SPEAKER 1 Sandip you spoke yesterday something about communist party it was very provocative. Ca c communist party being one of the isolated

16:09 MALAVIKA Loneliest, I think he said.

16:11 Yes.

16:14 Sorry, yeah.

16:15 HEMANT (?) Comment?

16:17 SANDIP Not regarding particularly about the communist party, but I was thinking about something. No, I think there are two ways of answering the question of the relationship between individual, the sea of presences. I think one would be based on the model of flâneur, no, whose prototype is Charles Baudelaire. No, the one who is immersing in the crowd at the same time, you know, taking a distance from the people around. So the flâneur can be a model, no of a model of engaging with the sea of presences at the same time taking it as an opportunity to boost one's own ego. The other model would be as Suchismita and Hemant would you know suggest, some sort of a populist you know relation that individuals will constitute between themselves or with respect to the leader or whatever. So in maybe one can think about a third model as well, which is more popularized as no idea of multiple [?]. I think that was already there in I think that was in your mind when you are formulating the question that the individual coherence would not be coherent anymore in the sea of presences. I think there are three things.

17:43 ROHINI I have a question, would we even be

17:46 Sorry?

17:46 Coherence in the sea of presences? I mean wouldn't that be one of the interesting things if you couldn't?

17:53 SPEAKER 1 Sorry, say that again, Rohini. You lost I lost you in the first half.

17:57 ROHINI No I'm saying that how would one even recognize the individual's coherence in this? I mean, I'm making it now not specific to like a party thing, but if we're saying it's more like a self-organized what Suchismita sorry, was talking about more the not the party kind of dynamic but the other, then if you have individual coherences, then wouldn't it be more interesting if you could not distinguish the individual coherence not because it was all sort of one big

18:28 Yeah.

18:29 What if the c I don't know what not and now we're not calling it the collective, but what if the sea of presences was so well what's the word? I suppose un what's the word I'm looking for?

Like what if it was at such a level of not organization but sort of understanding if you like, that it was just

18:50 Not distinguish individual.

18:54 ADITYA So yeah, exactly. So what I'm saying is are we then producing an oxymoron of sto oxymoron of sorts where we are when we are saying that does the and that's the question that whether the individual coherence goes into a dissolutional space in this particular sea of presences that I'm talking about. Or and also I just to lead that to the next question, which is also to see what happens, what kind of and Hemant brought up consensus and I want to bring back somewhere the consensus when we say can disagreement be a catalyst for transparency? So this is also building upon yesterday when we talk about collective space as governed by secrecy and as governed and camaraderie and collective space as governed by transparency. And I'm going into a particular form of speech, especially when you spoke about organization or understanding. Can d can we think about disagreement as being a catalyst for the transparency within these organizations or understanding? This is something that we can think about. Is the disagreement the form of way in which this functions or do you think there are many additional

20:10 MALAVIKA See, I go back to what Hemant was talking about being heard. So when there are individuals in a larger group or community or collective whose opinions do not necessarily align with the consensus, then the disagreement needs to be heard.

20:40 HEMANT But you know we seem to be talking about some kind of ideal or we are creating some kind of normative. but I think in being you know firstly I think in the in the last question we did question coherence itself, you know. In it we individual coherence is very subjective. Unabomber always thought he was coherent, you know. And so many other people who act like you know psychopathically, they think they're coherent and this that's one kind of coherence which is to one social totally incoherent and so from there if you come you know it's transparency is again very problematic, you know which is also assuming that such a thing is achievable. I mean when we are transparent I think we are the opaquest then. When somebody says I'm an open book, I always suspect that, you know, that this is i it's a bit like you know reading Deleuze, you know, you can understand all the words but the meaning is like it would take we just to get there [?].

22:11 ADITYA Well, I just want to like not to d deviate the discussion, just to think about, for example, the idea of that you brought about and which the other people have discussed also, the idea of consensus and its relationship with disagreement. And for me personally, the most interesting thing about a collective space is that it's at the end it's not actually an agreement of sorts, it's actually a consensus where everyone is heard at the same time there are particular elements of everybody each other's we could call coherence or not coherence, that is up to us. that is being heard and then you finally reach to a consensus. So what I'm trying to arrive at here is to say that can then disagreement be a catalyst to engage or any of us found disagreement as a catalyst to engage within collective spaces. Or when we are working in

23:05 MALAVIKA Limit of compromise in consensus then.

23:09 ADITYA (?) Well, certainly. So

23:13 SATYA The thing about disagreement is that somebody is raking the muck and basically if you rake the muck, things come up from under the surface a little more. And even though it looks like things are getting more opaque, actually by bringing things which were under the surface, perhaps that helps with more transparency and more dialogue.

23:35 HEMANT You know, I gave an extreme example which I'm which was not flippant, but it was an example of a kind of you know the international community is a kind of collective, you know made within certain parameters and you know our friend in inverted commas Trump, he made certain gestures or sounds which are not very conducive to the ears of North Korean leaders. And so he immediately tested an intern intercontinental you know ballistic missile. So here are two kinds of transparencies. two kind of revelations. What I think of you and he said,

okay, this is what I think of you know. so what I'm saying is that you know certain revelations of an intent is that transparency and you know I'm not really sure how in a collective total transparency can be can be achieved and somebody was saying yeah Suchismita I think that you know it would be a compromise of some kind and then again you know it would be like in the last case where the your coherence could be will have to be within a social within a consensus

25:30 ADITYA But what I'm saying is the transparency is not positioned at least here as a ideal situation. Of course, transparency does invite certain kind of compromise and that's why we call it consensus and not agreement of some kind, because it's not agreeing to each other's terms always, but it's agreeing to a mutual understanding. of course there are permitted

25:56 HEMANT (?) It has a positive charge to it. It's a you know, in political terms it's quite a desirable thing, though then again, you know, the question comes.

26:08 ADITYA Well it came actually transparency came about in the context when Sandip was yesterday talking about comrade, for instance. The idea of comrade which is premised on transparency as in rel contrast to something like secrecy, which was one of the discussions that we had seems to be one of the b ways of thinking about collective practice where they have shared secrecy and that is the reason what it is bound together with. So anything else? Sorry?

26:41 SANDIP No, actually when I was talking about transparency yesterday, it was in the context of the valorization of secrecy. No, right now like we are away from that question of secrecy. here I would prefer the term contract, you know. A kind of contract which exists between the comrades or the party members and also the contract which is made you know an object of public scrutiny. Right. So this contract is m publicized and more people are invited to join the automatic system [?].

27:17 So in that way the contract has to be transparent or at least it has to be communicational. Right. It has to be very communicative in that sense. yeah, it was in that sense I was talking about transparency. Okay.

27:36 HEMANT I think also there's a kind of instrumentalization of transparency or in a collective. the way you are framing it, you know. that collectives they you know, as I noted in the on the Facebook comment that, you know, i is the collective about is you know the individual versus the collective about intention being, you know, singular intention being the basis of not work or politics or a kind of strategy, you know, collective strategy. So if it's a strategy, you know, authorship is not the criteria of coming together and then you're strategic to effectively to campaign to act. you know in politics in art then of course you know a functional transparency will be there but if we talk philosophically of re you know getting to a distilled kind of self where you are the real self or where you can't defer or relatively where you can't go you know deeper would be too deep then that point that kind of acting would be I think difficult in this day and age or I'm being too romantic I'm or not romantic but I'm kind of looking at a scenario where people are they totally know each other and just and that level of depth of engagement, you know. They kind of they work together very effectively. There's kind of efficiency that comes from this kind of it's not consensus but a kind of unified intention of three or four or five or many kind intentions.

29:50 SATYA Within that functioning, how can disagreement play a part?

29:56 MALAVIKA I feel even if that functions in that sense of an ideal way, I don't think it can actually sustain like that for very long. Because people change, circumstances change, and then we will assume that everybody's receiving and perse perceiving things in similar ways and that does not happen. this brings out the question of monotony for me. If it even that kind of an ideal utopian state where everything is so efficient and everything is participative and there's this sense of transparency I don't know. Wouldn't it get monotonous? It would just be like clockwork.

30:43 SUCHISMITA (?) It does, which is why collectives fall apart and then new collectives are formed.

30:47 SUCHISMITA (?) Yeah.

30:49 MALAVIKA I mean, we have to we have to start.

30:51 ADITYA A disagreeing theater or something anyway go ahead

30:56 SUCHISMITA What?

30:56 I agree with that.

30:57 SATYA But you see, going to that limit sorry, go ahead, Bryce.

31:01 BRYCE Oh, I was just gonna say I mean in an idealized scenario where things were perfectly transparent and we were at maximum efficiency just for being able to speak so clearly and communicate effectively then I think that disagreement would come with a sense of objectivity in debate. Because we all have our own narratives and our own sense of coherence, of course. And so because we are individuals with those perspectives, then we would be bringing those perspectives to the table trying to weigh out the best options in rather an objective way. And so I think that in that idealized sense that disagreement becomes rather a tool for progress in making those calculations rather than it bringing the end of that very ideological nature itself.

32:14 That's where I was also going in terms of like

32:17 SATYA A collective need not necessarily

32:18 SATYA (?) Fall apart

32:19 If disagreement is used in an effective way or as a tool.

32:25 SUCHISMITA No, absolutely. I was a little flippant when I was saying that, but because I think honestly that's how a lot of collectives which seem to work and which stick around for a long time is precisely because there is a lot of room for disagreement, which kind of you know nurtures further debate and sharpens your own arguments. I mean, whenever there's an argument, it kind of for I mean there's a disagreement, it forces you back to kind of go back and hone your own points and so on. But seeing that, I mean, even I don't think ideally when we have collective spaces, the idea is not that it stays there for posterity. People come together for a certain amount of time. There are certain things that work out, and then that's the kind of openness with which a lot of with which we also devise collective spaces. That there is a certain kind of openness and openness that is there where it's not binding on you, right? I mean it's binding to one extent, but it's not. where you will be compelled. Like which is why I think if I have to inst I mean instinctively guess what Sandip was saying, that's why communist parties tend to be very lonely, because it's too binding.

33:31 BRYCE Yeah, I completely agree with that. I guess the way that I had been applying this in my own mind was on a humanitarian level and outside of more specific and purposeful collectives that we would actually form in practicality, but in like the hyper idealized

33:59 Concept behind this, if that makes sense.

34:05 HEMANT You know in there's a Japanese collective. I can't get the name all. So it's a collective which has very broad kind of intentions. And there is no hierarchy there. And with every project they have been

34:32 So kind of subscription or you know to a collective is optional and it's totally open. There's no hierarchy and you work as a group. And i it's assumed that you know there will be limits to kind of collective action. And so then you get new members. It's got a very catchy name. It's it was really if you ha look at the videos, I'll I think I'll post it on the Facebook when I remember the name. So that's one model and the other thing is that a collective which is you know which is which is asking questions which is which is breaking consensus okay will be a sturdier stable model you know because you are always aware of the pitfalls of consensus. I think consensus shouldn't be the thing a collective should look for or I could I could ask this as a question whether consensus should be a desirable thing within a collective and at what level you know and then again I think in you know we are talking about temporary space and remember that you know collectives will be located within a system economic you know, political etcetera. So the dynamics within individuals with that outer system of the collective with the with the larger environment we'll also have to think about that and how we you know again the question of transparency of how transparent one can be you know I've never I mean you know it

transparency in scientific or psychological terms is really a very problematic term you know it's I think so we should also check the history of this term when it came into being you know

37:15 ADITYA Are we saying are we okay we are not actually talking about transparency as I said as an ideal situation, but we would like to I would like to add a little bit more of what Malavika just talked spoke about monotony, which is to like especially it becomes even more interesting within both as an individual within collective space as an individual yourself and the collective space as you operate together, there are three conditions if you were to speak about here what we were discussing. So there is a particular kind of relationship that they share with authorship. I'm not saying that's radically different, but there is a particular kind of relationship that they share with authorship. And the question that I would like to explore is does di declaration of authorship? the idea that this is authored by this particular person foster monotony. Is there is that the one that would actually foster towards a particular sense of monotony and then maybe go against the grain of what coming together of a particular group of people would like to do. What do you think?

38:33 SANDIP (?) You mean in the functioning within this c I mean how

38:36 ADITYA (?) Within in like if you were to say a declaration of authorship that you know, for example, if you were talking about consensus or disagreement, etc., there is also a particular kind of binding together that is happening.

38:54 ADITYA (?) So what I'm trying to say is that one is the authorship within collective spaces, one is the authorship within individuals you know. So the declaration of authorship, are we saying that the is there a possibility that the declaration of one authorship would foster monotony? And make things less ag ambiguous?

39:18 SANDIP If you allow me to use the analogy of communist movement once again. There is a almost a cliche discourse within the communist politics that masses make history or masses write history. But no but as I said before we now realize that the communist movement was the most lonely mass project that has ever taken place in history. Then what we realize by right now is that in through this rhetorical masses, actually the something opposite was taking place. Something more lonely and more isolating experience was holding the organization. So in that way the revolution was something quite opposite, against no against what the communist ideologues were imagining at the beginning of the movement. So I think when back to this no kind of equation between disagreement and transparency, I think a better word would be revelation or unveiling. when we talk about transparency something like a static flattened out visibility image.

40:31 ROHINI Is that can you repeat that word you said as an alternative to

40:37 ROHINI (?) Or anything.

40:40 SANDIP Should be more. [?]

40:42 SANDIP (?) Or unveiling.

40:44 HEMANT Yeah.

40:45 HEMANT (?) Okay.

40:45 HEMANT (?) Okay. Sorry, go ahead. I interrupted you, Sandip. Go ahead.

40:50 SANDIP Yeah, so then I'm thinking that about this idea of authorship only. So yeah, this idea of authorship, sometimes it can take the posture of, you know representing the masses, but at the same time it can conclude into a form of you know a radical loneliness. So when I was talking about the loneliness of communism, it was more like a heroic loneliness, a kind of tragic loneliness. It was not something like you know kind of anti communist reading that I was making, but it's kind of, you know there was a tone of regret or disillusionment in that. Yeah.

41:30 SATYA (?) But would you ca characterize it as monotonous in any way?

41:37 SUCHISMITA That won't be nice.

41:39 SUCHISMITA (?) Sorry.

41:41 SATYA Da whatever you just what you were talking about, the voice that rises out of the mass. Yeah. You know, i it sounds lonely and the tragedy of it and s and things like that, but would you look would you find anything monotonous within that?

41:57 SANDIP Monotonous In fact it was not mon monotonous at all. Had it been monotonous then the history would have been different. Rather the you know, the history of the moment was full of dissensus disagreement and all.

42:16 We have to accept that.

42:21 Yeah.

42:22 ADITYA I'm also thinking if you said that the no po the m the monotony of the political rhetoric, no, I was just thinking as you were speaking. if it is no, I was just a thought, maybe something to pick up on or we can go ahead with what other silent observers of the group.

42:43 HEMANT (?) No, I don't know if we are

42:47 If are we for I mean, we should all be for maintaining certain discreteness of each voice within a group. You know? that will be desirable.

43:00 SPEAKER 3 I think it kind of like when we're talking about declaration of authorship okay

43:07 ROHINI I think it's important here to distinguish that what are the terms of not engagement, what are the terms of the collective we're talking about here? If it's the sort of thing where

43:19 Where it is collective authorship for want of a different another word, and then you're talking about, you know, declaration of that authorship, or if we're talking about a looser, more self organized kind of system than my experience has been in terms of spaces where in where there was space for individual declaration of authorship, it actually strengthened that sense of collect

43:43 SPEAKER 1 Say that last part again, Rohini, sorry.

43:59 SANDIP Well, yes, it does.

44:01 SPEAKER 1 Rohini the we missed the last part of what you s just said. Can you just repeat it if you don't mind?

44:07 ROHINI Yeah, no, I was just saying that my experience has been in a looser, more self organized kind of a collective or a presence, their declaration of individual strengthened and reduced monotony. That's different from what? Sorry?

44:25 ADITYA Okay. So you're saying that basically it reduced monotony in a more loosely organized group, is what you're saying, right?

44:31 ROHINI Yeah, I mean we have to that's what I'm saying. Like there are two different ways this could function. If we're talking about a kind of specific set of engagements within this group where then where it was a kind of defined form of authorship and then the in then it becomes a different do you know what I'm trying to say? Like is that if there's a shift in how you're defining authorship, then that's a different thing. Whereas if it's a more loosely organized thing where authorship was never re is the collective authorship is one thing, individual authorship within that helps to break monotony. That's very confused, but yeah.

45:03 HEMANT I can cite one example here, you know, the in the nineteen seventies the artists who were political activists or rather I should say the term was interchangeable, you know. so it was it was politics by other means. You know, if you if you indulge in politics you'd be you'd be thrown out of the plane, you know. so in that situation it was i the you know there was a purpose and that it was easy to subsume one's individuality or individual voice. And hence that was such a you know that Latina Latin you know conceptual art actually began there. And people don't know that because we don't know individual voices.

46:03 So somehow that is not lost really, but yes, it's not foremost in our consciousness, you know, at that moment. It was so rich and so life affirming and you know, it was radical politics, you know, in by another means. And so here we have, you know, one model where since there were no distinct voices it was it must have been efficacious. There was but somehow it I think authorship would have brought it to larger notice to given it visibility.

46:51 I think or we could also turn it around say that, you know no authorship tends to make it very you know, very Soviet kind of severe that this collective has produced something, you know? And

47:08 ROHINI No, it is possible to do both, right? You could have a meta sort of purpose, whatever that means, and you could also do individual I don't know, like that. It is possible to do both.

47:19 HEMANT (?) I'm not sure.

47:19 HEMANT (?) Thing is.

47:21 Are very individual you know focus. I think individual voice is so rich it comes from somewhere. And then yeah within a s strategy it can be subsumed but you know strategy means coming together and you know having a function basically. So you are instrumentalizing your individuality and that instrumentalization is called the collective.

47:52 SATYA Even if you do that and you are not called for it, for example, you take away any signs of authorship at all. And you don't have because see to me the metadata of authorship also causes bias, right? So if you take that away altogether, then there's a different product that is in front of you then.

48:17 BRYCE So I don't know if I'm applying this perfectly well, but I think when it comes to authorship, in a way we're really talking about giving credit to people in validating their contribution within like their role within the collective or something. So like an easy example would be with movies, right? Like at the end of the movie the credits roll and all of those people are given their authorship in a way. So if you were to take that movie and only to say like this is a Stanley Kubrick movie and remove all of the other credit from being supportive in its creation, then I think that you do create monotony for those people because then they are grouped together in their sense of purpose is diluted. So it really depends on how you're like what level you're applying this authorship to.

49:25 ROHINI I mean, I think just to pick up on that and just to specify, I was I was speaking specifically in the term in terms of sort of artist run, artist organized collectives for other artists build practice. And for me what I've seen is that the ones which are usually more successful and long lasting are those one which as I forget who mentioned, one, they're fluid, so they allow people to come in and out, but also those that allow individual artists to have their own practice. But it's not that you know, that I think becomes essential because otherwise it becomes very frustrating, as you said, you know, for individuals within this. It is a loosely self organized system, but then you're able to contribute to the larger, I suppose, you know scene of the to the culture, but you're also able to make your own individual voice heard.

50:12 ROHINI (?) Yeah.

50:15 BRYCE I think that in that sense the enemy to monotony would like the correlation would be sacrificing your sense of individuality for the sake of something bigger.

50:31 And I think that's kind of the balance that would need to be taken into account to combat that.

50:42 SANDIP Right.

50:48 MALAVIKA Can you say that again, Sandip?

50:50 SANDIP (?) No, we should see authorship as an acceptance as of responsibility. Rather than an act of giving credits. Right. So in that way authorship for example in almost all the copy materials [?] still they don't do away with the notion of authorship.

51:09 SANDIP (?) So I think we should defend the notion of responsibility, even if it manifests through the notion of ownership.

51:21 ADITYA You're s you're saying that the taking of the authorship is a moment of taking responsibility? Is that what you're saying?

51:27 Like both are almost synonymous. Yeah.

51:33 But how

51:35 Why would it be an individual?

51:36 SATYA Because if it's within a collective and there's a collection of ideas that are influencing a certain voice to arise from within the collective, then that responsibility falls on the group and not just that individual, right?

51:50 BRYCE (?) Others can

51:54 HEMANT (?) I think we are we're talking about two models, you know, political and artistic.

51:59 SATYA But even within artistic, like if there is a voice that is coming from within the group, you know, and this person is not saying that they're doing it out of an individual place. If they are

52:10 SATYA (?) Speaking from within it's a

52:13 BRYCE It's coming from a congregation of several influences and impressions, perhaps.

52:18 SANDIP (?) Let me give an example. This point I made yesterday also. for me the an art collective like Raqs or the selection collective [?] in terms of their authorship they are not much different from an art selects of both of them [?]. Right. In terms of authorship both work almost similarly. Even though one is collective and the other is not.

52:44 HEMANT You know, another model is scientific model. The one of the lunar modules that was sent up on the moon was I met a scientist who actually designed the landing gear. And so that one every scientist there were a group of scientists individually they were they were put in charge of you know since they were specialized, a specialist in the field, each one you know produced one thing or took care of one aspect of the model. And so it was a successful you know thing. And so each one got a claim, it was a collective, but you know was NASA, but within NASA those the collective actually is making sure that we remember what came from where, you know. So here could also be we could think of a collective responsibility to credit, you know individuals within the collective. And otherwise responsibility of an artist, yeah I don't I've never heard of artists being responsible in a in a you know this could be maybe for switching off switching off lights at the end of the day in a studio. But otherwise collective responsibility and individual responsibilities plays within political more than you know or you know within the collective is which is which is about public service. you know otherwise for example Union Carbide.

54:41 BRYCE (?) Okay, the one that did the Bhopal tragedy, you mean?

54:44 HEMANT (?) Yes, so there and an individual was responsible for you know, for negligence. But the responsibility had to be taken by the collective b by the Union Carbide.

55:00 ADITYA (?) Corporation.

55:02 HEMANT And within that they had to find an individual who was responsible ultimately. So that kind of you know, many kinds of responsibilities being kind of forwarded to the next one. We had to find one person who would hang basically.

55:18 ADITYA (?) Okay. Okay. Final remarks because we are going to be off very soon. So final remarks, especially people who were silenced. [?]

55:28 BRYCE I think that the that last point was actually really interesting because the dynamic of monotony would really change for kind of the field that the collective exists in. And just for example, the easiest example would be the contrast between the scientific community and the artist community, where on the science side it's very much taken for granted and objective that you know there are really specified engineers creating that one little component for a whole grand orchestration to land on the moon, for instance, and that's all accounted for and they're able to rationalize that much more effectively, but when it comes to artistry, when you're assembling something i in a much more ambiguous kind of field and when everyone is struggling to present their own unique voice and have that be heard and recognized, then it becomes a much more delicate situation and I would say there is a higher sense of responsibility to maintain the credit between how everyone brought something together. but yeah it's just I agree I agree with dynamic shifts. Yeah.

57:04 BRYCE (?) Okay, on that note are we good? Comrades?

57:07 ADITYA Yes.

57:10 SPEAKER 1 Okay. Thank you everyone for joining. Some of you were at very short notice. Thank you.

57:18 ADITYA Bye.

57:19 BRYCE (?) Bye.