Excavating Texts, DAY 3

A broadcast by Surfatial, the collective of Satya Gummuluri, Malavika Rajnarayan and me, 3 May 2015. 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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00:06 PRAYAS Yeah. Welcome to the day three of Excavating Texts. Sorry for the delay of the few minutes.

00:17 Our first question for today is actually linked to what we were talking about yesterday. If we surrender, what will we have to say or write—or, and write? Isn't deliberate action the source of the urge to communicate?

00:49 So, if we don't actually do anything, what are we going to talk about?

00:55 Right.

00:59 SATYA (?) The second part of the question is interesting. Isn't deliberate action the source of the urge to communicate?

01:08 PRAYAS Yeah, so surrendering is in that sense ceasing—

01:12 The opposite.

01:13 Yeah, just to deliberate action.

01:19 SATYA But is deliberate action the source of the urge? I mean, doesn't the urge predate the action?

01:32 PRAYAS Deliberate action might actually... the thought that you can actually deliberate on a sequence of events, right? Even though you very well might not be able to do anything. So, I mean, I'm saying in a given situation, when you know that nothing is worth doing...

01:59 SATYA (?) Mhm.

02:01 PRAYAS And..

02:02 SATYA (?) Okay.

02:03 PRAYAS ...and you still know that you can do many things—

02:07 SATYA Yeah.

02:08 PRAYAS —you know? But nothing is worth doing.

02:10 SATYA (?) Right.

02:12 PRAYAS So you could look at those two situations as something—a situation in which you're surrendering, and a situation in which you go on—

02:20 SATYA Choosing to act.

02:22 PRAYAS Yeah, you go on trying to deliberate and perform action. So the— so our personhood might actually have a lot you know, to do with that kind of sequence of deliberate action. So...

02:42 PRAYAS (?) So it's interesting because deliberate can be two meanings, which is.. Okay, deliberated action. You thought about it.

02:51 SATYA Yeah.

02:52 SATYA (?) Yeah.

02:53 PRAYAS Something you do and you know you're doing it.

02:57 SATYA Okay, yeah. I see what you're saying. Yeah, this makes sense. Yeah. And then the first part: so in that case, what will we say and write?

03:14 PRAYAS (?) Yeah.

03:19 SATYA It's—it's good that we—for me at least, to establish the foundation of where the action is coming from, or why it's happening, and then if that is the foundation, then what do we have to say and write?

03:35 PRAYAS Yeah, most—most of our most—most of what we consider worth communicating is either something that we are thinking, doing...

03:48 SATYA Mhm.

03:49 PRAYAS ...or stating, you know, in terms of our positions or our whatever—how we like to be known as, or telling stories about what we did, what we dreamt, what we want to do—

04:03 SATYA Mhm.

04:04 —our vision.

04:06 It's almost like we are creating a vision now.

04:11 PRAYAS We are creating?

04:13 SATYA A vision. Because see, I have to speak something, so I have to do something, so what do I speak?

04:21 PRAYAS Yeah, so if I—exactly. So basically, I mean, I think just to maybe distil it down, maybe it could just be: if we, you know, don't do anything—

04:35 SATYA Mhm.

04:36 PRAYAS —then what can we say? What do we have to say? Because what we seem to fill up our conversations with are—

04:46 SATYA What we do.

04:47 PRAYAS —yeah, it's either reportage or plans—

04:50 SATYA Yeah.

04:51 PRAYAS (?) —desires of things we want to do.

04:55 SATYA Yeah.

04:59 I know exactly what you're talking about.

05:03 PRAYAS Yeah, and that is, I mean, looked at in a..

05:11 SATYA Yeah.

05:12 PRAYAS ...in a specific enough way—I mean, in the sense if you zoom out, if you just try to—if you acknowledge the landscape you're living in as a—as a kind of complex situation, and you know—

05:23 SATYA Mhm.

05:24 PRAYAS — I mean, like we were talking about last time, that it's a—it's a zero-sum—

05:31 SATYA Mm.

05:32 PRAYAS — you know, situ—situation, and you know if—that whatever you're going to do is not really going to change the—change that, the balance, right?

05:44 SATYA Mhm.

05:46 PRAYAS So then what will we have to say? So how can we look at the role of communication, or the role of language in terms of how it helps us communicate? How—how can we look at that as something that doesn't have anything to do with our deliberate action?

06:08 SATYA Mm. And the thing that occurs to me again is the environment. I mean, the environment seems to have—like, why speak, really? There's nothing to say. There's nothing to do. And so, if the—the environment expects a certain type of communication just because of how it is, most—most often to general—to generalize. And if that's the case, then there's nothing to report, there's nothing to say.

06:46 PRAYAS Environment requires a particular kind of action, you're saying?

06:50 SATYA Mhm.

06:51 PRAYAS And in its requirement it also—it succeeds. So we are doing what the environment needs us to do. Right? I mean, that's what you were saying, right? No?

07:10 SATYA Mm, I think I was saying the opposite, which is the environment expects the individuals to be doing certain things and to be speaking about certain things that they are doing, or whatever it is. Like you said, reporting, etc. But if the individual has nothing to say anymore—

07:29 PRAYAS Mm.

07:30 SATYA (?) —then... I mean, there's nothing...

07:35 PRAYAS Mhm. I mean, they could easily be— we could think of easily of outsourcing the whole conversational layer of our life to these tropes which are—

07:49 SATYA Mhm.

07:50 PRAYAS —you know, yeah, reporting on what we do, because we don't really add any sentiment to it by doing—by doing the reportage ourselves.

08:05 SATYA But what if we are not doing anything?

08:12 PRAYAS Yeah—

08:13 SATYA I mean, we can report anything we like. You know, just to please the environment we can report anything.

08:22 PRAYAS Yeah, but at—at some level you hit a wall of constraints. Like, you know, if you have a —yeah, let's say you have a fantasy—

08:33 SATYA Mhm.

08:33 PRAYAS —you like to imagine yourself as a, as a very busy person who has a lot of things going on, a lot of resources—

08:42 SATYA Productivity.

08:43 PRAYAS (?) —yeah, and a lot of course, money and all that.

08:47 SATYA (?) Mm.

08:49 PRAYAS Then you can do a—maybe you can do some things to project some—some of those things.

08:56 SATYA Correct.

08:57 PRAYAS But you can't manufacture the cash.

09:00 SATYA Correct. Precisely. And you can play that game, you can play that role, but if your own self is okay with it, that's fine. But if the self is not accepting it anymore, then what?

09:20 PRAYAS I mean I think what we're stumbling into is the understanding actually that no matter what is okay with your—with yourself to enact—

09:35 SATYA Mhm.

09:36 PRAYAS —no matter what you want to project and what is okay with yourself to project—

09:41 SATYA Mhm.

09:41 PRAYAS —there are—there are, in any case, going to be some things which depend on external factors, which—

09:51 SATYA Right.

09:51 PRAYAS —which you don't—which you don't control.

09:55 SATYA Right. And—

09:56 PRAYAS And—yeah, as far as those external factors are concerned, you are doing nothing.

10:05 SATYA Right.

10:06 PRAYAS So, as far as the country's military is concerned
10:12 We are not doing anything.

10:14 SATYA Correct.

10:16 PRAYAS They are doing everything.
10:19 So, there is always a, it's always possible to, I mean, the, it's just a matter of how deeply you acknowledge your own uselessness.

10:33 SATYA (?) Correct.
10:38 Correct. And if you acknowledge it, if you truly acknowledge that... and there's different levels of uselessness. I mean, uselessness from the perspective of whoever defined what useful is.

10:54 PRAYAS Yeah, they, I mean someone will always find us useless. And in
11:02 In cases, in situations where you're actually countering the, if you're trying to swim against the current, you might, those might be most of the perspectives. So, it's maybe everyone considers you to be
11:22 Useless. And actually that's making, that sounds very a very interesting perspective to me, as in the, you know, the inverse of actually our attention economy, right? It's the

11:40 SATYA Yes.

11:40 PRAYAS Reverse of that. So

11:42 SATYA Yes.

11:43 PRAYAS How many people think, in how many people's perspective you're absolutely useless would determine your actual, your actual value in

11:55 SATYA (?) Right.

11:57 PRAYAS In challenging the, you know, the perspectives which value use and disuse and

12:05 SATYA Exactly.

12:06 PRAYAS All of that.

12:07 SATYA Yes. And I can attribute if, usefulness in the sense that I am challenging someone else's notions of usefulness, therefore I'm pushing their envelope and I'm bringing about growth. That's one way to justify it.

12:27 PRAYAS And bri- bringing about growth.

12:29 SATYA (?) Growth in the other person's perspective because I have pushed their envelope.

12:36 PRAYAS Right.

12:43 SATYA (?) But then that's, that could be just another way of rationalizing my own sense of, my own uselessness.

12:54 PRAYAS Yeah. So, but so you are saying your contribution to, let's say, others knowing more about you, let's say

13:11 SATYA Mhm.

13:12 PRAYAS So is something, is a way in which you are creating value by helping them expand?

13:18 SATYA (?) Yes.

13:20 PRAYAS (?) But how do you get them to acknowledge that this is value?

13:25 SATYA Correct, exactly. And that's the thing, yeah. Exactly. And sounds like that's one place where speaking up starts happening.

13:38 PRAYAS Speaking up. I mean, it actually I mean, it, this could trigger both kind of you know, responses.

13:51 SATYA Mhm.

13:51 PRAYAS You might either speak up or you might just learn to shut yourself up.

13:55 SATYA Absolutely right, yeah.

13:58 PRAYAS So, it's if you, if you have this knowledge of being perceived as useless

14:11 SATYA Mhm.

14:12 PRAYAS (?) You would do, you might not feel like saying anything more.

14:16 SATYA Exactly. Exactly, because I'm just being. I'm being, I'm not doing, I'm just being. And if that's difficult for whoever else to understand, it's not really my problem.

14:34 PRAYAS Right.

14:36 SATYA That's one way of looking at it, so I don't have to say anything. On the other hand, if there is a, there is a different urge of wanting to communicate or wanting to be understood or whatever it is, then maybe some words might come out.

14:56 PRAYAS But don't all such words also tend to come out from the space of, let's say, oh, I want someone to understand how

15:08 SATYA Yeah.

15:09 PRAYAS (?) I do things, why I do things

15:12 SATYA Mhm.

15:12 PRAYAS (?) Why don't I do something else. So

15:14 SATYA (?) Yes.

15:15 PRAYAS I mean, it's like once you, I mean, in deliberate action what you're actually doing is specifying

15:21 SATYA Mhm.

15:21 PRAYAS In a, in a, in a, in a set of detailed ways

15:26 SATYA Yeah. Yeah.

15:28 PRAYAS You're specifying how you do things.

15:31 SATYA That is true. That's true. I can see that.

15:33 PRAYAS (?) And you want to talk about that, yeah.

15:35 SATYA Yeah. Exactly. I mean, it's like we were saying just a little while ago about trying to, I don't know, you said something which I've forgotten now, about defining what you're doing

15:51 What one is doing to the other person. it's like you get framed. If you, if you don't frame yourself, somebody else frames. And if there is a need or one cares about how the frame is being placed, then one might offer the frame oneself.

16:15 PRAYAS Right, but that is, that is work.

16:18 SATYA (?) Yes.

16:20 PRAYAS (?) I mean, positioning yourself

16:22 SATYA Yeah.

16:23 PRAYAS For yourself or for somebody else's consumption, both are work.

16:27 SATYA Correct.

16:28 PRAYAS Work which is of course, which goes unacknowledged, uncompensated or, and

16:36 SATYA Correct.

16:37 PRAYAS Whatever else, but...

16:40 SATYA That is true, yes.

16:44 PRAYAS (?) So, that takes us towards our second question

16:48 SATYA Mhm.

16:49 PRAYAS For the day, which is slightly long. I think it might actually be three questions in one. Is motivation a factor in determining our action? Are communities a source of motivation? How is action performed in isolation?

17:12 SATYA Right. And I think the first question actually comes in very nicely from the past discussion of there's something that motivates one to do something. If I'm being, if I want to frame myself and not want somebody else to frame me, then I am motivated to do something about it.

17:40 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, but this motivation of doing something

17:44 SATYA Mhm.

17:45 PRAYAS Will take you away from doing nothing. Right? I mean...

17:56 SATYA If I am motivated to do something, it means I'm no longer motivated to do nothing.

18:01 PRAYAS Yeah. Now the question is motivation itself worth looking at?

18:10 As in, which tools, I mean, what is this, what is motivation and is the character of the motivation, motivating agents, the

18:19 SATYA Mhm.

18:20 PRAYAS The desires actually, the set of desires that you call motivation

18:25 SATYA Mhm.

18:26 PRAYAS What are those? So

18:33 I mean, different set of things motivate different people.

18:36 SATYA Correct. That's right.

18:39 PRAYAS But..

18:43 SATYA I mean, again

18:44 PRAYAS Yeah.

18:45 SATYA We can go into the whole nature, nurture thing, you know, and environment. Nature, nurture and current environment could all determine what the motivating factors are. There are a gazillion number of them.

19:03 PRAYAS Yeah, if we, if we just look at, if we don't look at it so- you know, in a, in its sociological sense.

19:10 SATYA Okay.

19:11 PRAYAS If you don't look at it as motivating factors for groups of people, just look at motivation for individuals, you know. I mean, rather

19:22 SATYA Yeah.

19:23 PRAYAS Instead of for individuals, let's just zoom in further and say motivation for us, for you, for me, for what we, for who we know, right?

19:35 SATYA Okay.

19:39 I mean, I'm still not able to move away from, you know, what my character is, what my nature is, what my temperament is, what my construction is, what, how my construction happened over time and what my current factors are. I'm not able to move away from that.

20:00 Determining what my motivation is.

20:05 PRAYAS Right. No, so, okay, so let's say that you have a very you have access to a very clear vision of

20:18 SATYA Okay.

20:19 PRAYAS Who you are and what you want to do, and

20:22 SATYA Mm-

20:23 PRAYAS (?) Wha- and also why you want to do it. So you have a, you have this clear picture in your head.

20:28 SATYA Okay. Okay.

20:30 PRAYAS Now what this involves is you working tirelessly

20:37 SATYA Mm-

20:38 PRAYAS In essentially narrating your vision
20:47 Which might involve a kind of colonial
20:54 You know, colonization of other minds, like

20:59 SATYA (?) Yes. Understand.

21:01 PRAYAS Right? So

21:02 SATYA (?) Yeah.

21:03 PRAYAS At one point essentially if you have to decide, okay, do I get to do what I do
21:10 PRAYAS (?) Or does someone else get to do what they do?

21:14 SATYA Right.

21:16 PRAYAS And you might, you know, I don't know, most people, it's not a question of most people, it's a question of actually, yeah, just what do you do then? Do you go on trying to colonize, or do you at some point really hold yourself back?

21:36 SATYA Mm-

21:38 PRAYAS And at that point you ha- and at that point you come back to the point zero, which is
21:47 That you are motivated to do something which involves you to do something else which you don't want to do. So

21:53 SATYA Right.

21:53 PRAYAS You don't

21:54 SATYA Yeah.

21:55 PRAYAS You then again don't have motivation to do anything.

21:59 SATYA (?) Correct. You have to re-evaluate.

22:04 PRAYAS Yeah. So what happens then?

22:07 SATYA Correct. And that's the thing, that's the thing. It's like the vision itself, the vision may still be there, but this methodology is now in question as to I don't feel like colonizing anymore.

22:24 PRAYAS Yeah for whichever reason, either people are... the reason could be, oh, not so many people are getting colonized

22:33 SATYA Correct.

22:34 PRAYAS Or you know

22:35 SATYA I'm not really a very good colonizer, I don't know how to colonize very well, that could be another reason.
22:40 Yeah, or it could be about discovering that my act of colonizing people is actually
22:46 SATYA (?) Mm-

22:47 PRAYAS (?) Giving... is actually is a- is about giving a lot. And

22:52 SATYA Yeah.

22:53 PRAYAS (?) I don't feel so generous right now.

22:55 SATYA Exactly. Yeah.

22:56 PRAYAS (?) I don't want to give so much.

22:58 SATYA Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. Or the vision itself in question is being questioned in the sense there might be doubt about the vision itself.

23:15 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean doubt is something which we which we cannot actually think of because

23:22 SATYA Okay, we're keeping that aside.

23:24 PRAYAS That is... I mean, in the sense that you know, doubt is at a moment before you before that, before you have made up your mind.

23:36 SATYA Okay, but what I'm saying is doubt arising because of the process of colonizing, which shows me new information, which says that, you know, there's a reason why... yeah, so

23:50 PRAYAS Right. So yeah, things are not happening as fast and as

23:53 SATYA Right.

23:54 PRAYAS As whatever, as you might

23:56 SATYA Mm-

23:57 PRAYAS Have wanted them to be.

23:59 SATYA Correct.

24:04 And that sounds again like when we speak of colonization it sounds like communities in the second question: Are communities a source of motivation?

24:14 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, so I mean, these, this community question and the isolation question next are linked in a sense

24:22 SATYA Yeah.

24:24 PRAYAS That, okay, you might think that, okay, so if I, if I, if there is a body of people involved, then

24:33 SATYA Mm-

24:34 PRAYAS There might be more motivation to do something. Now, I don't know if

24:40 SATYA Or not.

24:42 PRAYAS (?) Or not. But

24:43 SATYA Yeah.

24:44 PRAYAS But you know with this, that brings in again the whole audience question, right?

24:49 SATYA Audience and also... yeah.

24:53 PRAYAS I mean, so, yeah, will you sing as passionately in a room which has one person

25:01 As in a, in a stadium with 100,000 people?

25:06 SATYA Correct, sure, I- that's one way of looking at it, but the other way is like creating with a community. I mean, are communities a source of motivation? Because if we are creating... how is action performed in isolation? okay, so if you are looking at action as towards the audience... I mean, the audience might actually inhibit me from pro- from the pure action.

25:35 PRAYAS Sure, but then I mean I'm just yeah, at this point looking at these three things, you know? So looking at so okay, what gets you started is motivation.

25:48 SATYA Mm-

25:49 PRAYAS (?) Motivation seems to come from somewhere out there, right? So

25:54 SATYA Or inside, right? I mean, does motivation always come from outside?

25:58 PRAYAS (?) And it c- it so, I mean, so inside, then let's say it's in isolation, right?

26:08 SATYA Yeah, exactly.

26:09 PRAYAS So motivation is there, I mean it's needed for you to do something, but it's either coming from out there or it's coming in

26:19 SATYA Okay.

26:20 PRAYAS From yourself in isolation.

26:22 SATYA Okay.

26:23 SATYA (?) But

26:30 I- I guess that's

26:32 PRAYAS What is this mot- motivation towards, right?

26:35 SATYA (?) Yeah, and where is it coming from?

26:38 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, so I mean the kinds of motivating forces

26:46 SATYA Mm-

26:47 PRAYAS That I am aware of for, I mean for example right now, are

26:50 SATYA Mm-

26:51 PRAYAS Generally towards the outside.

26:56 SATYA True.

26:57 PRAYAS Right?

26:57 SATYA True.

26:58 PRAYAS (?) So even if it is in isolation, like we were talking yesterday, even if it's in isolation you might be singing a song to somebody in your head.

27:10 SATYA Yeah.

27:11 PRAYAS Right? And that motivates you to sing the song. Being able to imagine that pers- that some- that listener inside your head.

27:21 SATYA (?) I don't know necessarily. I don't know if that's the only case. I mean, there is a case where there is no audience.

27:30 Because there does not need to be an audience. It's the act of singing itself that is self-motivating. I mean, there's some place where a spring is coming out of. And it doesn't need anything to bring it out. You know, it's like I feel like doing this, so I'm doing it.

27:55 PRAYAS Right, so there is no, you're saying there is no motivation involved. But

28:02 SATYA It's maybe. Yeah.

28:03 PRAYAS From lift- from getting yourself out of your room to go somewhere and perform somewhere

28:11 SATYA Right.

28:12 PRAYAS (?) It takes motivation, right? Otherwise you'll just

28:14 SATYA (?) Yes.

28:16 PRAYAS Just be where you are.

28:18 SATYA Right. That is true. And that motivation may not... where does it come from, you know? Like maybe it doesn't come. Maybe the personal

28:32 Or it isn't there.

28:35 Yeah. I mean, it could come from outside obviously, but if it comes from outside but it's not coming from inside, there is that conflict of: is this real? Is this motivation real? Am I being forced to do something? Do I really want to do it? Do I feel like doing it? That conflict, you know?

29:02 PRAYAS Yeah, because from your state of surrender, you know, your state of being absolutely useless, you're actually at least now considering that, okay, something might be worth doing. But what is that worth, you know? In that sense

29:23 SATYA Yeah.

29:25 PRAYAS (?) Is it, is it the core around which

29:30 SATYA (?) We bind around, spin around our entire

29:39 You know, sequence of, you know, of... and the entire story of who we are and

29:48 PRAYAS What we are and how we are?

29:52 Right.

29:54 Or is motivation that, you know, it's that story that

30:00 Something that we'll do will lead to something that will happen.

30:08 So is it, is it a desire for something

30:11 To happen that is motivation or is it that urge to be

30:17 SATYA Yeah.

30:18 PRAYAS (?) To be and become somebody

30:21 SATYA Mhm.

30:21 PRAYAS I mean, you know, just as in by your own self. I mean, just as in, you know, so like when you are trying to go off addiction, you

30:33 SATYA Yeah. Correct.

30:34 PRAYAS Hold on to the idea of yourself who doesn't need anything, any, who doesn't need to depend on any substance.

30:43 SATYA Right. yeah. Yeah.

30:47 PRAYAS (?) So that is also a kind of motivation. And I think that's the kind of motivation we are talking about.

30:55 SATYA Yes, I agree, I agree. I mean, I'm, see, I think I'm not looking at, you know, I go to work because I have to feed myself. I'm not looking at that kind of motivation. I'm thinking on, in terms of doing something because I feel like it.

31:15 Okay.

31:17 Is, does that make sense?

31:18 PRAYAS No, but, yeah, it's but it's just like this feeling like it

31:22 SATYA Yeah.

31:23 PRAYAS Is coming from

31:28 SATYA Yeah, and that—

31:29 PRAYAS Like, we are always incomplete, right? So we are always in motion.

31:36 SATYA Right.

31:39 PRAYAS So, but there are, there are already things we have set off in motion some time back, whenever, I don't know

31:46 Which are seeds of desire that want to be something. So either you go along, either you go along or you, or you try very hard to obstruct, right? To not be something. And which is—

32:04 SATYA But what if there is no impetus anymore to go along or to do, to not even do anything about it? I mean, I may have set off a desire in motion but it's just there, so, you know, it'll wither away on its own. Nothing will happen.

32:24 Right.

32:26 Because I, maybe there is no meaning anymore in that—

32:30 PRAYAS No, but that is the moment of collapse, right? So that is the moment of collapse in the addict's kind of you know, pathway or rather process

32:41 SATYA Mhm.

32:43 PRAYAS (?) Where it doesn't work out.

32:47 SATYA But is it doesn't work out or could it also be, you know, not finding satisfaction in it anymore? See, I could have been—

32:57 PRAYAS No, I mean, so not finding satisfaction in becoming de-addicted is the de-addiction program not working out.

33:14 SATYA But, see, addiction we are looking at it, addiction can be seen as a thing that we want to get rid of. So, see, desire is two types, could be different types I mean, but one type is I have to inject this drug into myself despite knowing that it's bad for me, and I want to de-addict myself from that. But on the other hand, there is setting into motion desires in the past, such as I had this dream of painting this masterpiece, but it's on its way, I have been pushing myself for whatever reason, it's been going. But now I don't see any point in it. I don't see why, it doesn't even, the desire that existed a long time ago doesn't even exist anymore.

33:59 PRAYAS Yeah, so how do we remind ourselves? Do we need reminders?

34:04 SATYA (?) Or do we? I mean, or have we outgrown it? We don't need it anymore.

34:08 PRAYAS (?) No, but then what you are saying is potentially going to set me in a, on a collision course with mortality, right? I'll just die. I mean, I'll—

34:22 SATYA No, but I might live in a different way.

34:25 PRAYAS How?

34:26 SATYA Maybe I find that putting, collecting stones and putting them together into a shape makes me feel, I feel like doing this now.

34:36 PRAYAS No, but I'm still going off the substance, right? So that, I mean, that is the motivation I'm talking about. I mean, it's like you are going off something because you have a desire to become something which is, which you have to practice by being something every day.

34:58 SATYA So do you want to, is your desire to go off the substance?

35:05 PRAYAS That is what we are banking on. If so it's the, it's a, I mean, de-addiction is all, is, can only be performed by someone voluntarily and not—

35:09 SATYA Okay.

35:15 Okay, so okay, we are taking that case where we are wanting to go off of a substance.

35:21 PRAYAS (?) Yeah. So, I mean I mean, I'm just going into this to think about how it might work, right? So if you have this version of a story running in your head of, in which don't want to do something, but you want to do something else

35:43 SATYA Yeah.

35:43 PRAYAS But then there is no other way of doing that

35:49 Except by doing, start, by starting to do it already

35:51 SATYA Going

35:54 PRAYAS Like, you know, and stick to it.

35:55 SATYA Correct. Mhm.

35:58 Right. I mean, if there is the desire to go off of the substance, then yes, I mean it's pretty clear that no matter what, something has to be done and stick with it.

36:08 Yeah.

36:09 That's true, that's true.

36:16 Yes, I was looking at a different case altogether, not a de-addiction case, but if we stick with de-addiction that's, I see what you're saying.

36:27 Right.

36:30 PRAYAS (?) So you know, actually then we realize that, I mean, I'm realizing right now

36:41 SATYA -huh.

36:42 PRAYAS You know, that, you know, we mythologize these things we do in life to such a degree that it assumes

36:49 SATYA Mhm.

36:51 PRAYAS Very large and grand proportions, right? So in the sense, this whole narrative of being an artist

36:58 SATYA Mhm.

36:58 PRAYAS Or being somebody, whatever

37:02 Is such a mythologized narrative that it

37:13 So

37:15 SATYA I mean, it's very closely tied with identity, right? I mean—

37:19 PRAYAS Yeah. I mean, which it's tied in with identity in a very, in a very close way.

37:26 SATYA Yeah, because I, you see, identities are defined in different ways. Like you said, I mean, the audience is defining me as an artist, or I am, I need to define myself as an artist because I think the audience wants me to define myself as an artist. But—

37:44 PRAYAS Haan. But my being an artist might actually be, might actually require me

37:51 PRAYAS (?) To be a private artist.

37:53 SATYA (?) That's also there, that's exactly right. That's the other thing, that—

37:56 PRAYAS Yeah, that is then in direct conflict with my being an artist at all.

37:59 SATYA (?) Yes.

38:02 Like if I say that I'm an artist, I'm not an artist.

38:07 PRAYAS Yeah. I mean, so it puts up, puts it in direct conflict with that.

38:08 SATYA Yeah.

38:11 PRAYAS Yes. Yeah.

38:12 So what I am realizing now is maybe it's possible to be whoever you might, you know, might need to be, want to be, whatever

38:25 SATYA But essentially in your own isolated context.

38:25 Mhm.

38:31 PRAYAS Yeah.

38:32 SATYA And outside that, it doesn't really matter what you do and what you don't.

38:37 PRAYAS (?) And because it's not really, it's not really possible to always align the motivation

38:42 SATYA Mhm.

38:44 PRAYAS (?) You know, your motivation to do what you need to do

38:48 SATYA Correct.

38:49 PRAYAS (?) It's not always possible to align that with

38:53 With the needs of, you know, this whole bubble that you live in, so you

38:59 Feed the monsters and

39:01 SATYA Correct.

39:03 PRAYAS (?) You basically make it a whole charade of, you know, trying to

39:08 SATYA Yeah. Because if no art is happening right now, it doesn't necessarily mean that I'm not an artist, just because no art is happening.

39:18 PRAYAS (?) Right. I mean essentially that's a very private that's a very private kind of a choice.

39:26 SATYA Yeah.

39:27 PRAYAS Or a, and a, and an, and a, yeah, it's a choice that, okay, if you think you're an artist and if you need to be that, whatever you think that might be

39:40 SATYA Yeah.

39:41 PRAYAS Then that is strictly up to you. So

39:44 SATYA Yeah.

39:45 PRAYAS And then something else, you might need to do something else to really try and pay your bills or do whatever

39:54 SATYA Right.

39:55 PRAYAS And that need not have anything to do with anything else.

39:59 SATYA No, I

40:00 I agree with that. I mean everything is really in isolation. It's like, yeah. It doesn't mean anything. It doesn't mean that this person is this or that person is that.

40:12 PRAYAS Yeah, because it's I mean, you know that the process of actually de-addicting made me think of this, because—

40:24 SATYA Mhm.

40:25 PRAYAS —an addict or someone who's not an addict are only, it's only a quest— it's a question of being honest to yourself within your own—

40:35 SATYA Yeah.

40:36 PRAYAS —you know, self-image.

40:37 SATYA Mhm.

40:38 PRAYAS You know? It's not a question of actually hiring a policeman to look after you and make sure you comply with what you have decided.

40:48 SATYA Yeah. it's interesting you bring the addiction because I'm trying to relate that to the image of... to the image of being an artist.

40:59 PRAYAS Huh.

41:00 SATYA See, you could be addicted to the idea of being an artist or you could be being an artist. I mean, it's kind of like authenticity in a way.

41:12 So maybe I'm holding on to an idea of being something because I'm expected to, or because I think I should, or whatever.

41:22 PRAYAS And because— or because maybe that's all that you have ever—

41:27 PRAYAS (?) —done. I mean—

41:28 SATYA Yeah.

41:29 PRAYAS —maybe the only way of, you— the only way you've seen yourself ever—

41:35 SATYA Correct. Mhm. Correct.

41:36 PRAYAS (?) —has been in this— through this mythological construction.

41:40 SATYA Right. Right. And the de-addiction process is where, in a way, it's a collapse because I'm challenging my very foundations. And I'm asking myself, "Is this who I really am? Like, am I really an artist? What is this artist?"

41:57 PRAYAS But this is fantastic! I mean, I think we should run a de-addiction—

42:04 SATYA Yeah, I agree.

42:05 PRAYAS (?) —program for artists and really trying to have them— because it, you know, it brings up a lot of discomfort very quickly—

42:13 SATYA (?) Yes. Yes.

42:15 PRAYAS —in the same way as it does in an alcoholic who's trying to— whom you're trying to say that you drink too much.

42:23 SATYA (?) Yeah. Yeah.

42:25 PRAYAS Because it's a, it's maybe a very closed— you know, it's a very close identification.

42:34 SATYA Yes. And that's sort of like also a ceiling, because if that ceiling is not broken, development sort of is within that ceiling, even of the art. That's what I feel, like.

42:50 PRAYAS Right.

42:52 SATYA Like it— it's like some people just— I mean, in my opinion, some people create some things which are repetitions of what was before. There's nothing new there.

43:03 PRAYAS Right.

43:04 SATYA I mean nothing wrong with that or anything, but the point is, it, to me— yeah.

43:08 PRAYAS (?) And I mean they're able to do that because the— living with the construct of being an artist allows them to do that.

43:17 SATYA Right. I mean, depends on the motivation also. If, for me, the motivation might be that I want to create or I want to push the boundary or whatever, so... so I need to shatter the existing mold.

43:41 PRAYAS (?) Which actually brings us to our third question.

43:45 SATYA Mhm.

43:50 PRAYAS Which is, you know, if constructs in language need to be architected—

43:57 SATYA (?) Mhm.

43:59 PRAYAS —then how does drifting and meaning-making reconcile with each other?
44:07 So if you— to say something, if you actually have to say it in that, you know, in that sense, like, you know, line up logic of that kind—

44:20 SATYA Mhm.

44:21 PRAYAS (?) —for me to understand it, then...
44:31 And if we want to drift in—
44:35 —in this scope of language—
44:37 —but we also want to make a point—

44:40 SATYA (?) Mhm.

44:42 PRAYAS —then how do we do both of them at the same time?

44:44 SATYA (?) Yeah.
44:49 The direct way of, when I'm looking at this question in a very direct way, the way it seems is allowing the language to wander about, allowing exploration without any intent and without any expectation, is— could be a way to eventually for meaning to arise on its own. And when that— when that drift is done in a way where inputs are coming from external places, then you know, it pushes the drifter to look at various perspectives and maybe some meanings may arise.

45:40 PRAYAS So drifting is a way of actually traveling, you're saying? So drifting in a construct of language might work in the way that traveling works. So—

45:58 SATYA Yeah.

45:59 PRAYAS (?) —move around and familiarize yourself with—

46:03 SATYA Yeah, correct. Like if I'm, yeah.

46:06 PRAYAS (?) —a lot of other perspectives.

46:08 SATYA Yeah. Like I might be, for— if you take the travel, like you said, it's like you're be— you're in a place where you don't know anything, you're lost, and you sort of make your own landmarks, familiarize yourself, that sort of thing.

46:24 PRAYAS Right. So then what you are— what you're doing is yeah, you're working at a level which is more meta than language as well, right? So you're zooming out one more level.

46:44 SATYA Mhm.

46:46 PRAYAS This is interesting, because yeah, I have not been essentially, you know, I have not been able to reconcile drifting, which is something I enjoy doing a lot—

46:57 SATYA (?) -huh.

46:59 PRAYAS —and—

46:59 SATYA How are— how are you seeing, how are you, how are you seeing this?

47:04 PRAYAS I mean, yeah, I don't, I don't really know how to reconcile drifting and meaning-making, in the sense—
47:11 —that you know, the logic of text actually—
47:15 —doesn't allow drifting. So if you want to make a point, you have to make it, you know? You can't keep going on detours.

47:30 SATYA See, but— not necessa— well, it depends, because—

47:37 PRAYAS I mean if you go on — I mean you have to carefully manipulate it or construct it, in the sense that if you go on detours, that's fine, and then you have to come back. I mean, you have to control that, in the sense, you're— so that a going away doesn't mean, doesn't mean that you really disappear.

47:59 PRAYAS (?) You might have to steer the going away back home—

48:03 SATYA But why?

48:04 PRAYAS (?) —at some point.

48:05 SATYA Why do you have to?

48:06 PRAYAS (?) I mean, otherwise it's just— the reader will just get lost.

48:10 SATYA But that's what I'm saying. Like, if you leave the reader up to their own devices with this piece of text, they will make their own meaning.

48:21 PRAYAS Yeah, but not a meaning that—

48:24 SATYA (?) You want to.

48:26 PRAYAS (?) —yeah. I mean, which is essentially the conflict that is within text, right? So—

48:31 SATYA Yeah.

48:31 PRAYAS —or within any kind of communication, that you want to—

48:36 SATYA Convey.

48:37 PRAYAS —say something.

48:39 And at the same time, of course, the— and what you want to say, the reader or the audience will never—

48:47 SATYA (?) Yeah.

48:47 PRAYAS —I mean, get in a very distilled form, but—

48:50 —let's say if there are— if they are separated by three counts, what you say and what they get—

48:57 SATYA Okay.

48:58 PRAYAS —if, even if they're separated by three counts, then if you say something, which is anything at all—

49:05 —then even if it is not that what you're saying, but they'll get something else, but they'll get something at all, you know? So in a sense, they get at least something from— just by the benefit of your linking through all the fragments and leading them somewhere.

49:24 SATYA Correct. So there has to be a certain number of clues that are given. So the drift could be controlled in that sense where, like, even like earlier we talked about traveling: you are lost in a place, but you are lost in a place. You are not lost in what you don't know what it is. You are lost in a specific—

49:47 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, let's say you're lost in a place.

49:47 SATYA —construct.

49:49 PRAYAS You're lost in a locality of a, of a city. You're lost in Tokyo, let's say.

49:53 SATYA Correct. Correct.

49:54 PRAYAS Now what happens? Now—

49:58 SATYA I mean, you have, you do have

50:00 Certain— the thing is, fortunately or unfortunately, there are certain parameters that you do have. You know you're in Tokyo, you know you are lost. You know that this is what is around you. So there is a— and I think that goes with the text in the similar way. If the text is constructed in such a way that it is— some context is given, then meaning could be constructed, if the goal is to convey a specific meaning through the text.

50:33 PRAYAS Yeah. Yeah, at least it'll become, at least it'll become another experiment in the whole exercise of meaning-making, right?

50:44 SATYA Yeah.

50:45 PRAYAS It won't be terribly simple, and it won't work like it always does.

50:50 But something might emerge.

50:52 SATYA Yeah, see, what you're— what I'm hearing now is a process of discovery, where a certain number of clues are given, but the person has to discover it for themselves, which is what happens a lot of times with— some of the authors that I like to read are people who are not explicit

in what they are saying. You have to figure it out yourself. You have to— the au— the reader has to do the work.

51:15 PRAYAS Well, I mean, that's often more possible in poetry, right, than in prose.

51:22 SATYA I mean, even in prose. No, I mean, for example, to use a very trivial example is like some of these books on social human complexity, you know, where you have characters which are very complex and they are interacting with each other. It's not explicitly stated what each person is thinking or— they just have sentences that they— especially in like older writing from say the Victorian times or something, things are not explicit. You have to figure it out. What is this Jane Eyre thinking or whatever, or this what's-her-name in that Pride and Prejudice.

51:57 PRAYAS Right.

52:00 SATYA Which to me is very interesting because they are hints, and— or some of these—

52:05 PRAYAS (?) No, but those hints are being exploited to analyze the text, right? There's a— that's the— that's a—

52:13 SATYA Oh no, to get the story itself.

52:16 PRAYAS Okay, so not to get the subtext or something.

52:19 SATYA Not necessarily. Like even some of these Japanese sort of stories where things are— the story is not explicitly stated. You— baad mein ghar ja ke chamakta hai ki haan, aisa hua karke.

52:31 PRAYAS Achha. Okay.

52:35 SATYA It's like you are— you are implanted, certain seeds are implanted in the brain, which— your neurons haven't fired in the moment when you're reading it. Later on, when you sit with it and you let your thoughts drift here and there, the neurons associate themselves and that sequence fires, and you— that's when the realization happens.

52:58 PRAYAS Yeah, because, you know, like for me this comes from a conflict where—
53:05 I want to write sometimes, but I don't want to have a very clear point, right? You know, so—

53:11 SATYA Yeah, agreed.

53:13 PRAYAS I don't want to make a point which is very—

53:15 SATYA Yeah.

53:16 PRAYAS Absolute, like what I have done in the past, and it's like, okay, sometimes I have maybe wanted to state things in a very fixed way.
53:29 But now some— I don't feel like doing that because I feel like giving myself more space to—
53:37 You know, breathe in.
53:40 And otherwise if you just— if you're just living with a lot of absolutes, then—
53:46 PRAYAS (?) There is no space for slippage, you know?

53:48 SATYA Correct. But this is in conflict with what we are saying about earlier, which we said we want— there is a point to the text, or, you know, you're trying to convey something to the audience. So that's in conflict then.

54:05 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean the whole— the whole drive of the narrative, you know? The whole—
54:12 Drive of the text, which is in a way organic. It's not something which you can— I mean, you know, so in the sense, if you write a sentence—

54:21 SATYA Mhm.

54:21 PRAYAS A sentence has to make sense. You can't utterly write utter gibberish, right?

54:27 SATYA Okay.

54:27 PRAYAS So in a sense, you have to write a sentence that makes grammatical sense or which holds together. Not—

54:35 SATYA Which holds together, yeah. Which holds together is a better way to put it, yeah.

54:39 PRAYAS And then the sentence after that, you need to link in some way to the previous sentence.

54:46 SATYA By some logic, which may not be the standard logic.

54:51 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean— yeah, that's what I'm saying, like this opens up now for me, because—

54:59 PRAYAS (?) I mean, so it could be an adventure like that, which is—

55:03 SATYA Yeah.

55:04 PRAYAS Which is an adventure which allows text to be more of a word puzzle actually.

55:10 SATYA Yes, exactly right. That's exactly— and that's kind of how I look at poetry also, because poetry for me, abstract poetry at least, it's like a bunch of images which the reader— I may have a point which I'm trying to convey, and even within abstraction, I feel like there's ways in which points can be very sharply conveyed through very specific imagery.

55:35 PRAYAS Yeah.

55:36 SATYA Which, like you said, it's a puzzle. The person goes away and later on puts the pieces together. It may not be apparent right there because you're sort of engaging with the words and trying to make the logic— logical sense out of it. You're applying your grammatical rules or whatever and you don't see that they are working. But there is some other logic.

56:00 PRAYAS Right. So, I mean, in the— in the— — so just referring back to the— to an earlier conversation—

56:13 SATYA Mhm.

56:14 PRAYAS (?) When you're saying that, so I'll take a surface at a time—

56:20 SATYA Mhm.

56:22 PRAYAS (?) And write about that and—

56:26 SATYA Mhm.

56:29 PRAYAS So what would— is the— is— is something predetermined in terms of what you need, let it be— so it needs to be a poem of a kind or it can be fragments of prose?

56:49 SATYA (?) It could be anything, either— either ways, either ways, whatever comes out.

56:54 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean, so it's not— so you don't need a fixed format of things.

56:57 SATYA Mm-mm.

56:58 PRAYAS Okay.

56:59 SATYA No. No, I'm not looking— I'm seeing very—

57:04 I mean, again, I'm not looking at the productivization as much, because that tailoring can happen at a later stage or whatever, but if it can be very free and open, like, what does a surface trigger? When a surface is being looked at, what does it trigger? That's one way to look at it. Or if there is a certain meaning that is trying to be conveyed, can that be shaped into something?

57:37 PRAYAS (?) If there's a certain meaning that is— that needs to be conveyed—

57:41 SATYA Conveyed. Mhm.

57:42 PRAYAS Can it be shaped into something?

57:44 SATYA Correct. So I already know what I want to convey. Can I fit— can I put it into— I already know what I want to convey, what does the shape of that look like?

57:57 PRAYAS (?) So, you know—

57:57 PRAYAS (?) So, the shape of— of that—

58:02 Would that be another surface, right?

58:04 SATYA Yeah, exactly.

58:06 PRAYAS Right. Okay. So the surfaces which we encounter and the surfaces which we populate.

58:12 SATYA Which we populate, yeah. And it could be any— any interpretation. It could be like you were saying two days ago about surface of experience, like what is behind, you know, the surface, so.

58:25 PRAYAS Right. Because— yeah, I mean— yeah, that'll— I mean, I think maybe at the onset, I mean, at the— in the— in the beginning, it might be— yeah, just interesting to maybe then go in and specify—

58:47 Or the surface, which surface are we talking about, and—

58:51 And not in a— yeah, not maybe in a very— yeah, I mean, I think I want to break out of the voice which I've been writing so much in, which has been a very— which I almost— yeah, it has become a very dry and laborious voice for me now.

59:10 So—

59:10 SATYA Mhm.

59:11 PRAYAS I want to try and be more fluid in—

59:16 SATYA Okay.

59:17 PRAYAS In how I state, because the stating should also be an aid in questioning, you know?

59:27 SATYA (?) The— I'm sorry, the stating?

59:29 PRAYAS The stating can also be an aid in questioning.

59:32 SATYA Okay.

59:34 PRAYAS You know, instead of it just being as a— as a stream of knowledge.

59:42 SATYA Yeah.

59:44 PRAYAS It can be a— it can be triggers for questioning.

59:46 SATYA Yes. Yes, yeah. Yeah. It could be— and the trigger for creating an image within somebody, within the audience, instead of explicit statement, yeah.

59:58 PRAYAS Yeah.

01:00:01 Okay. So anything else that you'd like to you know —

01:00:11 Talk about with the three questions we had today because or in the, or in the previous two days, because it's the, it's the concluding session of excavating Texts. So we can, yeah, we just try and wrap up or we can just conclude.

01:00:30 SATYA Yeah, I guess... was trying to think about, think about, you know, what you [unclear] rules, right? Like meta-rules of sharp communication. I feel like that's... I feel like I don't know if we went into that enough. And today's last question I feel like gave a clue towards framing those rules. That's this one thing today. And, you know, that framing of the rules is something I, my, I was predisposed when I approached every day's session, thinking that, you know—

01:01:11 PRAYAS Yeah.

01:01:11 SATYA What are these rules, right? So...

01:01:12 PRAYAS (?) Yeah. I think yeah, the take... I mean, I think just taking up the rules in themselves as another—

01:01:20 SATYA Mm.

01:01:21 PRAYAS (?) You know writing or whatever. I mean, just trying to draft out some rules and similar to way we tried to make the charter—

01:01:33 SATYA Yeah.

01:01:34 PRAYAS Would be, yeah, would be quite worthwhile. So I'll draft a set of rules and send them to you, and you can feel free to add some or remove some or something like that, and—

01:01:45 SATYA Okay.

01:01:46 PRAYAS We can then make something and maybe put it up.

01:01:51 SATYA (?) Sounds good. Yeah, that sounds really good. Yeah.

01:01:55 PRAYAS Yeah. So we'll stop the broadcast for today, and—

01:01:58 SATYA All right.

01:01:58 PRAYAS I'll write to you soon about, you know, the starting the whole surface conversations.

01:02:05 SATYA Sounds great.

01:02:06 PRAYAS See you. Thanks. Bye.

01:02:08 SATYA Okay, thank you. Bye.