# Hours To Center (Vidisha-Fadescha, W Don Flores and Prayas Abhinav)

*A broadcast by Surfatial, the collective of Satya Gummuluri, Malavika Rajnarayan and me, 20 July 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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00:00 PRAYAS (?) Live now, hey.

00:02 PRAYAS (?) We have to be on time in life, right?

00:07 W DON And we're on. Hey Vidisha.

00:10 VIDISHA (?) Hi Don, how are you?

00:12 W DON (?) Good. You haven't changed a bit.

00:20 VIDISHA (?) Okay.

00:23 PRAYAS So you're going to the Hours To Center, right? So you want to introduce this the title that you chose for today. And you know, this occasion we are all here talking as part of your residency. So you'd like to introduce this thing?

00:45 VIDISHA (?) Is this the d are these the dogs at Don's place or are these the dogs at Pras's place?

00:50 PRAYAS My place.

00:52 VIDISHA The Don actually was telling me that it's better for him to start at midnight. Is that correct?

01:01 W DON (?) It gets noisy here. We've got dogs here too. I think they're all asleep, so that's good.

01:11 PRAYAS How much do they sleep? How many hours do they sleep a every day? Your dog?

01:17 W DON I ha I have no idea. I must assume maybe eight hours of napping.

01:26 W DON (?) Well.

01:31 I can also hear some chickens.

01:34 PRAYAS (?) Chicken No.

01:37 W DON Or is that me? Maybe that's me.

01:39 PRAYAS Yeah.

01:43 VIDISHA (?) Oh there you go, see, I've got dogs.

01:48 No, really go.

01:50 Yeah, so I think it just kind of was the I mean, because there is no center, but it was still the I mean, when we were trying to figure out what time do we do this.

02:01 VIDISHA (?) Yeah.

02:02 We were just trying to know where we were placed. And when one was trying to say when we were placed, one was looking at so I mean how many hours we were away from each other.

02:14 And actually also the G M T but nobody cares about the G M T. So yeah, it was just I mean if that if this right now became the center then we were just hours from the center.
02:28 Right.
02:28 That's how hours from the center started.
02:31 PRAYAS So this is our zero.
02:35 VIDISHA Yes.
02:35 W DON Yeah, that's correct.
02:37 PRAYAS (?) Perfect.
02:39 PRAYAS (?) Okay.
02:40 W DON (?) Or now it's like zero one, maybe.
02:44 PRAYAS So Don, you'd like to ask Vidisha what she's been doing in the residency?
02:51 W DON Yeah, I'd be very happy to know. I'm so curious.
02:55 W DON (?) Yeah, that's
02:56 I've been keeping m you know track of all the well most of the postings and everything. So yeah, I'd love to hear it.
03:07 PRAYAS Yeah, so Vidisha, why don't you maybe offer us a kind of a journalistic account of your time
03:18 The death, okay. [?]
03:21 VIDISHA I don't know how this account is gonna come out, but I think I mean one of the things for me at every residency is again, I'm gonna repeat this all the time. Is the idea of the process and it kind of just like happens. Sometimes you think about it, so you kind of let's say, yes, this is what I So there is there's planned and then there's unplanned. So one of the first things which happened actually at the residency, the day one, was I had this dream and in that dream it was very related to like another dream I had when I was like nine years old. So
04:02 When I was nine years old I had this dream which was we were in like a
04:10 Basically you were like in the middle of it was like Jurassic Park.
04:14 VIDISHA (?) Huh.
04:15 But the dinosaurs were having a fight. And like so there was like a dinosaur war. And so but there were two places. One was like one was a house, but it was very similar to like my grandparents' house. And there was this other kind of a cafeteria, like room kind of space. And I don't know where that belonged to. But they both were like the safe spaces, even though we were in the middle of a war which was happening about dinosaurs. so what happened is that
04:52 Nothing. So then there was a dinosaur who used to actually like reading. So like this is like what happened in my dream where the dinosaur liked to read. And I don't know Pras if you remembered we used to I mean in the nineties there used to be like this television show which was called Danu. [?]
05:12 PRAYAS (?) Dann? [?] No. I don't really know.
05:15 VIDISHA (?) Dinosaur.
05:17 Okay, no.
05:18 And he used to be like people's friend or something. Actually I don't remember it, but I just remember there was like a song there was maybe I'll play it at some point. And anyway, so yeah, so that dinosaur was a baby dinosaur and he liked reading. So if you gave it books, which we used to give it while you were at my grandparents' house and all it was and it became friends with us, so then it would like take us on its back between those two places. And then I don't remember the dream anymore. Okay. But the dream that I had on the first day of the residency was very similar to this idea. So it was again you were at a war front. So I was at a war front in that dream. And I again had like a safe space which was a house again, and I don't know whose house it was now. And we were and the war was basically happening in the backyard. The war was happening in the backyard. We were on some kind of horses. And we were like running on those horses. But like the but the grass field wasn't like a violent grass field. It was like this

Narnia, like beautiful kind of grass field. Like it didn't like seem like bloody or anything, but it was war. But we were everybody was at war. but anyway, so I mean so then it was then I just like

06:52 So when I was nine I had written down that dream because my mom had asked me to write that dream. And so then I wrote my dream this aga this time again. So that's how the residency started. And then after that, I mean then I've d been doing like other things and Don has also seen them actually.

07:15 But and Don also commented on some of those things. And I mean he was looking. I mean I think there was also this time how Don and Prayas actually got to speak with each other for the first time is Prayas I think I don't know why, he just like oh so I need like few people to talk to.

07:34 VIDISHA (?) Yeah.

07:35 VIDISHA (?) Oh I like that.

07:37 VIDISHA (?) Ha.

07:38 VIDISHA (?) I'm like, Oh, so Prayas needs somebody to talk to great.

07:42 PRAYAS (?) Ha.

07:44 PRAYAS (?) I thought that was that was a nice start.

07:47 Yeah. I mean I just yeah sometimes I like to be honest. okay, so I don't have anyone to talk to. So let's try to solve this problem. So if you solve this problem with network why can't everyone why can't everyone suggest five people for me to talk to? And you're the only one who actually suggested people and actually had conversations. So actually yeah, we chatted for a bit and we spoke for a bit and then we've been engaging. But no one else actually did. All the people attacked, nobody else. [?]

08:25 VIDISHA So what did you guys talk about? What did what happened?

08:28 PRAYAS We were talking I think what I remember we were talking mostly about Surfatial and

08:34 VIDISHA (?) Yeah.

08:36 PRAYAS You know what and how Surfatial

08:42 Conce conceives of as knowledge and how let's say how does teaching operate as a process and how learning operates as a process and so I that's what I remember right and maybe if you

09:00 W DON And I think there was a p a point there where we started talking about how

09:10 For certain things to happen, certain other things have to be pushed back.

09:17 W DON (?) Right.

09:18 Kind of I kind of remember we were talking about when something is there it pushes back against something else and that's how you know it's there. Or maybe I'm just making that up, but I just remember that.

09:36 PRAYAS Right. I mean I don't really remember the context of that, but I do remember that we were talking about these roles that we play and the space that we occupy and who we appear to be and who we are and all of that business and which actually Vidisha when you were talking about the porosity of the self on the on the Swimming Lessons session. I think we also getting into that a little bit. But yeah, and I think that remains I mean that remains for me a very persistent kind of interest because you know who you what you narrate what the narrative of whoever you think you might be, you know, what your narrative of yourself is and whatever yourself might be. That decides almost everything for us, not just in terms of our social transactions, but also in terms of our

10:42 You know what how people remember us and when did I mean remembering is not just in the t sense of history, but also in the present and how they know us and how they think of us and how let's say how we can use that for what we want to do with them.

11:05 W DON Yeah, I think it's interesting also because the narrative becomes shared, right? your narrative of self

11:17 I guess needs validation from another narrative?

11:25 PRAYAS Yeah, and I think at that point we were talking about this whole idea of self validation that I like to develop and which is which actually

11:40 Discounts away all the other validation loops that we need to somehow pass through in order to prioritize production. So in the sense that yeah if you are if you need to do what you need to do then that's never going to happen when if you're still waiting for someone to confirm that yes you can do this. So you know the validation loop. So if you

12:13 PRAYAS (?) Great.

12:14 So a pr because when production involves waiting, then it's already it's already spent. It's already not possible.

12:23 W DON Yeah.

12:24 PRAYAS So just to keep that whole immediate process actually immediate, right? Just to okay, you think of it, you do it, you think of it, you do it, and just to prioritize that, but actually haven't really figured out or thought much about how to deal with the other half other part of the business, and which is that after you have produced, after you actually have something, and you want to want people to adopt it. You want people to let's say share your perspective or buy into your perspective, whatever. I haven't really I haven't really

13:04 Figured much of that out because that seems to be in some ways contrary to the whole process of production. What you need for producing and what you need for let's say disseminating or you know, all of that. There seem to be

13:23 Different as processes that you need. Yeah.

13:27 W DON I think I g I was kind of reading this scanning this ar article earlier about I forget his name. He's like one of those French writer guys who's talking about was talking about how the encounter is thing that changes us. only kind of happens either it's partly because of logistics or a kind of logical frame, but also it's not it's not just that, it's also about an experiential frame, but it can't be reduced to that either, so it so it hangs in between those two. And I think that's kind of what Prayas is talking about here. where the process itself just has to happen except that there's some sort of contradiction because it's it has to happen with somebody else

14:36 PRAYAS (?) No, so after it has happened, you know.

14:38 PRAYAS (?) After it has come.

14:40 After it has happened, how does it travel? So that seems to be this whole puzzle which is which has different people and different

14:53 Let's say different people involved and I find it very difficult to think of models in which multiple people are involved because I can't really think how the c someone else could be could be thinking so differently from how I think because I mean in terms of the if you think at the cosmic scale or if you think of you know whatever we can try to think of at that scale. We can't really do it. But if you z try to zoom out and think of at that scale then how is it even possible that multiple people exist? Because where does the other even come from?

15:43 W DON Well, I think maybe it's about because they have other desires.

15:50 PRAYAS (?) No, but let's say let's say we think of consciousness as this internet and

15:55 Mm-

15:56 So when you log on and when I log on, we are logging onto the internet. So when we l when we are conscious, then we are partaking in consciousness.

16:09 Mm-

16:11 Consciousness is still unified and it's

16:16 It's coherent in its character, right? It I mean the internet doesn't change just because I log in.

16:23 W DON Right.

16:30 What is that Vidisha?

16:33 VIDISHA I turned off the lights in my room but it's just better for me to concentrate like this.

16:41 PRAYAS You drew a wink on your forehead. [?]

16:44 VIDISHA Mm, because you guys can't see me. So I just

16:49 W DON (?) I think kind of new. [?]

16:51 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, we can see a face.

16:53 VIDISHA But then I go far, you can't see me.

16:56 VIDISHA (?) Yeah.

16:58 So but Prayas, then you are in two kind of physicalities. one is the conscious or two kind of consciousness. One is the o the internet's own conscious and one is the consciousness that you have when you are located in your own space. Or yeah.

17:18 PRAYAS No, so if you're conscious, then you are basically

17:25 Subscribing in some way to consciousness, right? In the sense so who you are when you are by yourself in your space is can't be really something very different from

17:42 W DON Yeah.

17:43 PRAYAS The collective social, I mean

17:48 W DON (?) Yeah, so the

17:50 VIDISHA (?) But that's your honesty. I mean that's I don't know. What are you saying, Don?

17:58 W DON Yeah, I g I'm I'm tending to agree with Prayas here. that there's not that much difference between who we are with ourselves and who we are with other people.

18:13 If there were, then there'd be such a break that we wouldn't be able to tell maybe.

18:24 W DON (?) Those two experiences from each other?

18:28 Or would we would we be able to?

18:31 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean I would really enjoy the enjoy it if it were really different because then the time I spent alone would be like a vacation or it would be like a refreshing time. But and you know, when I'm with someone else it's like, okay, it I then I have to play a role, whatever, but then but that never happens, right? I mean you're still having to deal with the same stuff when you're by yourself or when you're with others, right? It's the same thing.

19:01 You might choose to engage with things at varying degrees and intensities, but

19:07 VIDISHA No, I don't actually agree to this.

19:11 I don't I don't actually agree to this. I think we do perform for the other person. I mean it depends. Either that other person we make the other person perform for us or we perform for the other person.

19:24 PRAYAS No, we can perform but

19:28 And it's unconscious performance.

19:31 No, okay. In the sense okay. So if you imagine a sensor

19:37 Just like a machine, it's sensor. If you imagine this sensor and this sensor can sense that you are in the room. And if some other person comes it'll say no, you are not in the room, it's someone else.

19:52 Right.

19:53 Yeah. Okay.

19:54 So now regard regardless whether you are in the room with someone else or you are in the room by yourself, the sensor is always going to say whether you're in the room or not. Right? So the quality of your presence, you know, wouldn't really the your presence can't really change.

20:14 Yeah.

20:19 No, I'm a startup. [?]

20:22 [unclear]

20:23 You think

20:23 No right. I mean we can't change the change our presence. We can configure what we project. We can we can change what we project. We can change what we like to say or what we like to think even. But can we really do anything about our presence?

20:43 W DON Well, it's varying degrees, right? And I guess that's what you're saying. It you modulate it, which to Vidisha is a performance. I think that's what you mean, Vidisha?

20:59 VIDISHA No, I think I mean
21:02 Because Prayas, the sensor thing that he's saying, then it's just basically identifying you as a physical presence. You know? Like
21:14 Access absence. [?]
21:18 That you present. Say that oh it's someone you. But it's you are present, right? But I'm talking about that but of course there's but that's just the physical presence which is which is similar to your present presence anywhere else. So it's just that physical presence which is equal everywhere, but not the presence of the conscious or like what are you what is who is that person who's present.
21:51 You understand what I'm saying?
21:52 PRAYAS Yeah, but the who the who doesn't matter. See now let's say you think of silent actors, right? Actors who are silent. Now actors who are silent, they only have their presence to work with.
22:11 PRAYAS (?) Two?
22:12 They only have the presence to work with. It's a modulating the presence, like Don was saying, is their only language.
22:20 Yeah.
22:21 The modulating it in different ways and whatever. And so I'm saying that okay, where does the
22:30 Where does the who come in?
22:36 I mean modi modulating the presence is anyway s su such so much about
22:44 Stuff that we don't even understand. I mean I don't re I don't even think if there's any censor existing any way that technology has to even
22:56 Or even medical science and any bioscience, I don't think anyone has any way of actually trying to figure what it actually means to modulate your presence. What does it mean to actually act? Right? So they ca there's no camera that exists that can photograph different acts.
23:15 We don't really know what that's about.
23:20 So where does the who question come in?
23:24 W DON So there's no distinction between presence and identity.
23:29 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean that's the own I mean the identity is largely I mean your identity might be just might just be largely a gar [?] that you try to fashion yourself or let's say you identify yourself in terms of your
23:52 You know what you what you consciously choose or identify with in terms of cultural content and how you like picture yourself and all of that. But that's very that's very superfluous. I mean it's not really very basic in terms of who you are as a person. I mean if you were to lose a part of your brain, all of that will just disappear.
24:22 VIDISHA No, but okay, so now the thing is that when it comes to the idea of that presence, there is other things which are around it, right?
24:35 PRAYAS (?) Like
24:37 VIDISHA (?) I mean other things.
24:39 VIDISHA (?) Next one. [?]
24:40 Like chair, are you sitting? Are you standing? 'Cause that is changing and this I'm just talking about like
24:49 Just that physical presence again, like
24:53 So I mean so similarly even if you lose a part of your brain, that particular sitting or standing is going to define how you are present.
25:05 Because that's just the thing.
25:06 PRAYAS But it w it might define how you are present, but would it change very much the character of your presence?
25:17 W DON (?) But it's still you.

25:19 PRAYAS Yeah, it's still you, whether you're standing or you're sitting or you're doing anything else.

25:24 VIDISHA But then it's just you all the time. But what the but I'm only saying that the you keeps changing, the you is not constant.

25:36 PRAYAS No, but I mean I don't really I mean what I so I think yeah, what we were talking about that day in terms of in this reference, in this context in the p you know, with the porosity of the self that we are Yeah, so I think that porosity was more in terms of the voice, right? So voice and presence are

26:03 I think very different in terms of their where they how they reflect, right? How they make themselves

26:15 Felt so you could speak in different voices and those voices each of them would be very equally authentic even they would seem equally based on material that is really there somewhere inside you but

26:38 Presence has nothing to do it's not so high level. Like voice is very high level. Presence is very low level. It's I mean pr your presence is something your dog can understand. Now your voice is something if you're talking as one character or the other, your dog doesn't care. You know as long as

27:01 W DON (?) Yeah.

27:01 W DON (?) Yeah.

27:06 VIDISHA (?) Her dog agrees, guys. [?]

27:09 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, that's not my dog, that was a street dog.

27:12 W DON (?) Yeah.

27:12 W DON (?) I had reason too.

27:14 W DON (?) Yeah.

27:18 So

27:18 I think we're kind of identifying maybe almost two levels of you here, right? One, there's presence and what Vidisha is saying is that maybe the thing that's more than just presence is all fluid.

27:39 PRAYAS Yeah. Yeah. So in that sense I think what we are talking about is in that sense like hardware and if you if you talk about hardware and software in the sense, your presence is your hardware and everything else is software.

27:56 VIDISHA Yeah. So no, I mean so I've been doing this other thing where I was like taking interviews of anesthesiologists.

28:05 What's that?

28:05 And they were trying to tell me something, which is that you know your body so there are different levels that happen in anesthesia. one of them is that you just basically sleep. Okay. that the person becomes unconscious. But unconscious person still has reflexes. which means that if someone tries to cut a part of your body, your spinal cords cord says that oh this is harmful to you. Yeah, so you need to sorry, just give me a second, I need to become brighter. that something is harmful for you. So your b your body is gonna have reflexes and it's going to you know either push it, and this is you unconscious pushing something, like your mush muscle is going to like stop something from happening to you. So that's why you have to use the muscle relaxant as well. So that's another part of anesthesia where you have to use a muscle relaxant. where so now in that physical sense of being present, your reflex exists along with your presence, and you don't have control on that reflex. So that's also something that defines you even after having lost a certain part of your brain or lost that certain you that we are trying to get to. But so this is just like basic reflex that happens, right? Now what happens is that And again, like coming back to the event page on the residency where I talk about that the baby tries to grab fire. And then and then the baby what d he because he doesn't know what it is, he's curious to grab fire, but he knows that it's really hot, so he's gonna move his hand away from it. So that is just the physical reflex of the baby. The baby doesn't know why it moved his hands

away from it. So now the idea of now, the idea of more the consciousness of which is outside of that physical is that the baby does not really go and touch it. If it was even an adult and adult found something which is harmful, not an adult, but like a grown-up who has understood certain things and found something harmful, he would actually even not only move away from it but also push it. Or so have an opposite reaction, not only just a reflex of protecting yourself. So it attacks, it's also attacking, it's only not just you know saving itself from the initial presence. so those are so I think I mean I think understanding the idea of sleep as multiple levels of consciousness is also important. because if you see a sleeping person you can wake him up, you know. But unconscious person you can't wake him up. He will only have reflex. But the sleeping person could have more than that because he'll be glad. [?]

31:26 W DON Yeah, are you i if we're making a distinction between the reflex and the adult the reflex of the baby for example and the adult deciding that this is bad and so I push it away. Is there a difference between the two?

31:45 VIDISHA (?) Yeah.

31:47 Because reflex is not controlled by you. Reflex is also something which is present when you are unconscious.

31:56 PRAYAS (?) When you are not there.

31:59 W DON (?) When you were at the

32:01 Yeah.

32:02 W DON (?) Yeah.

32:03 W DON (?) The non you is still moving.

32:05 VIDISHA (?) Yeah.

32:09 PRAYAS No, but I think that is I mean I wouldn't consider that

32:16 Part of I think that is that is part of your hardwired

32:28 Physical presence in the sense that if you have a gadget and there are two components linked by some wire and if you try and power it on it'll not get powered on and it'll give you some kind of error. I mean that's something which a machine can do, that is check. A machine can check whether all the paths that it needs to function are present or not.

32:59 Right. So the reflexes are reflexes as self defensive actions which are automatic. Reflexes as instincts to let's say guarantee safety of some kind. Now that can be machine and I mean I like to think of whatever can be machine as something that can't be can't define anything about what it means to be human.

33:33 At all, right? So because we have already figured a way to construct it. And what we got by constructing it was not in any way human.

33:48 W DON (?) But you can fuck it. [?]

33:50 W DON (?) Go ahead, Vidisha.

33:52 VIDISHA No, go ahead.

33:53 W DON Ah w so really w when we're saying that the person is an unconscious the body is now machine and the you isn't there anymore.

34:09 PRAYAS Yeah, so it is like in the word that you call it's unconscious. So when you're not conscious, you're not

34:17 Yeah.

34:18 PRAYAS (?) Yeah.

34:20 VIDISHA So

34:29 PRAYAS But they might be part of your presence in a in a very hardware specific way. Right? Because your machine when you're when you are conscious

34:47 A part of you

34:50 Which is present is actually a machine, right? So in the sense how we function in terms of how our body actually functions, we don't have to think about it very much. We don't have to think about it at all, right? So it's

35:08 VIDISHA Exactly, that's what I'm trying to understand. That's why I'm trying to what I'm trying to understand from your idea that my presence is the same everywhere, that I then it's just basically your hardware which is same everywhere. It's not your software which is same everywhere. How can your software be same everywhere?

35:28 PRAYAS Right.

35:30 VIDISHA That's exactly what I was trying to ask about the idea of the present.

35:35 PRAYAS No, but presence even if we are thinking I mean I would still be hesit hesitant to equate presence and hardware. I know we tried to do that a while back, but I mean because but I'll I'd say that I mean we have not really figured out we have not really figured out how to how to make how to make things which are present in the same way that people are. We have not been able to do that. We don't know what presence consists of. Even in a hardware specific way.

36:21 But the hardware software divide the divide as a concept also I think is weak because it is going in the direction of separating the body and mind, so to say, which is maybe just a few steps away from separating the body and soul, which is definitely something to be remain away from.

36:49 W DON (?) Clear.

36:51 I know, we're kind of moving toward the

36:54 PRAYAS Yeah, so

36:56 VIDISHA I don't I'm not interested in the soul. I'm

36:59 PRAYAS Right.

37:00 VIDISHA I'm only interested in the conscious action. I'm actually also not interested in the hardware software business. I'm only I'm just I'm only trying to understand the idea of what do you mean by like I see Prayas, I've still not understood your concept of same thing being present everywhere.

37:26 PRAYAS Okay, so let's go back there. Let's backtrack and go back there because otherwise we'll just become we'll just become theological about this. So I think so you're the same thing everywhere in the sense that for someone who can't understand what you say, someone who can't understand what you

37:47 Or see what you do or anything else. They can still feel who you who is present, right? And now what does that involve? in what does it involve in terms of on your part? That we don't know yet. But and let's say it was a it was a faulty let's say idea to let's say to think about this as hardware, but then I don't

38:19 I mean I understand presence to be something which is very difficult for your act otherwise, right? Your act in the sense of in terms of what you like to project, what you like to do, what you like to say, what you like to think, all of that. That is your act. Now it's very difficult for your act to meddle to mess with what you are, how you are present.

38:51 But I think we can also argue aga this that this that this is not so, that it's possible that we are present in different ways. I mean because yeah, we don't need to accept this statement to be true.

39:13 W DON I it I yeah, I'm trying to understand it too. I d like the whole thing about making a machine that expresses in a human way

39:28 If I if I don't know, I guess kids do this more than adults, but if we have a cup and we name it and now it's a character and it's present to me as that character or that person, let's say Bob the Cup, and like I put Bob the Cup there and every morning I check up on Bob the Cup. And is that the same presence as other people are to me? I guess the there's a similarity but there's also differences, right?

40:18 PRAYAS Right. I mean can you even equate what the cup is for you to s what someone is for you.

40:30 VIDISHA (?) Yeah. Sure. I mean, why not?

40:35 PRAYAS I mean it'll be I mean I would find it so difficult to equate anything with anyone.

40:43 W DON (?) Ah

40:47 PRAYAS I mean just because you

40:49 VIDISHA Why are people so precious, Pras? Why you

40:52 PRAYAS People are not precious. People are not precious. They're just problematic, right? In the sense

40:58 PRAYAS (?) Yeah.

40:59 VIDISHA (?) That's someone sitting someone sitting in the room.

41:02 Why then why are you making the cup precious?

41:05 PRAYAS No, I'm the cup is not precious. The cup is something I can throw if it's not very expensive. But I'm saying if there's someone present in the room, I have to deal with them. And not dealing with them has to be a choice which then has to be, you know, okay, talked about that I'm not going to deal with you. But if there is someone in the room, you can't you can't just filter them out. I mean you can't filter.

41:36 VIDISHA That person is not sitting with you on like you don't have like a another kind of commode inside your bathroom that the person is coming and using it with you. You know what I mean? So where is that person sitting with you? That person is not coming to your bedroom. You're only inviting whoever you want to your bedroom. No w

41:55 PRAYAS I'm in this room and if let's say someone else is sitting here, then it's not going to be trivial, at least it's not going to be at least trivial for me to filter out their presence and go on as if they were not here. It is not going to be trivial. It's going to be an act of certain intensity for me to even get away with it.

42:23 W DON No?

42:27 W DON (?) Oh yeah, no go ahead.

42:29 Presence can't be presence is that thing that can't be ignored, right?

42:35 Yeah, I mean that's what I yeah.

42:42 W DON (?) But then like animals would have presence too.

42:48 PRAYAS Yeah. And animals are easy to ignore in that sense. But I think they're I don't know.

42:58 It's

43:03 I don't know, are we are we talking about communication then? Presences who which can communicate with us at our in our in our system of you know, language or whatever. Are we talking about that?

43:17 VIDISHA I think it's the I mean, see that why I said that why you valuing human beings more versus like I mean, let's not think of it as human beings. Let's just like think of it as presence of any kind. You know, and that coffee cup is something that he's holding in his hand and it's a chair that he's sitting on, you know. And there are other things which are happening in the background and all of those things are present and all of those things are ha I mean are moved.

43:49 In a different whatever way interact we are interacting with it in whatever way you know so but what so what I'm saying is that you can choose to

44:05 There are things even as objects which you can't ignore and same thing to with b with people. There are also people who can be in the same room as you and you actually don't have to speak with them, you know? To

44:18 PRAYAS Objects are so simple to ignore

44:23 VIDISHA Why you have to pass through a door when you're walking?

44:28 You ignore.

44:31 PRAYAS Yeah, you can pass through a door, you can and I mean you can't ignore a wall because otherwise you'll just crash into it. But I mean all of that

44:40 VIDISHA Using the door without cho like you don't have a choice but to use that door.

44:47 PRAYAS Yeah, but that's architecture, I mean that's the structure of space around me. That's my environment. How does it make how does it make a quality of the door that I can't ignore it? It's not something the door is doing because of which I can't ignore it. There is no there is no conscious th yeah, there is no consciousness. There is no

45:11 There is no where there is no consciousness, there is no presence. I would not think of objects being present in the same in the sense that yeah, like conscious presence.

45:27 VIDISHA (?) What do you think, Don?

45:29 W DON I'm thinking of other objects that kind of get into way more than just normal objects.

45:39 Would we say a dead body was an object if you

45:45 PRAYAS Yeah that's a that's a really that's a really tough puzzle breaker because yeah, a dead object a dead body is a is not conscious at all because it's dead. So but then it also

46:07 But it also has a specific kind of presence for you to not be able to treat it like any other object. So in the sense you can't use dead bodies as furniture, even though they would be comfortable because you just can't. It would it would not

46:25 VIDISHA Why do we have dead bodies that's funded so that it's got a world? [?]

46:30 Yeah, it just

46:31 W DON Hold on. I mean, like furniture is essentially dead tree bodies, right?

46:41 PRAYAS Yeah, we don't think of wood as dead body of a tree.

46:44 PRAYAS (?) Yeah.

46:45 VIDISHA (?) Yeah. Well it depends on the person.

46:48 Silvani. [?]

46:52 PRAYAS No, I mean a dead body as furniture would fulfill all the criteria furniture. They are they're soft.

47:04 VIDISHA No one needs mattresses anymore. Like that's not even more. Thank you.

47:09 PRAYAS So fat people. I think we need fat people as dead fat people. So is it all of US? All of US is

47:20 PRAYAS (?) That's only that.

47:25 W DON Thin people could be yoga mats then.

47:27 W DON (?) Is it your cama? [?]

47:35 PRAYAS No, but that's but Don I mean thought experiment like if you Yeah, I mean you would I really don't know if it I mean a dead body furniture would wouldn't be possible in this meditative of civilization that we live in. You know, it'll take a dramatic

47:57 VIDISHA Happening somewhere.

48:00 PRAYAS No. I mean I don't think even I don't even think that some obscure tribe somewhere does it. I don't think anyone does it. Because

48:09 Okay.

48:10 I if it's if there's one thing common between how all humans deal with dead bodies is that they don't treat dead bodies as ordinary material. So for example, yeah in here like Vidisha, you know, I mean Indians and their you know all their traditions and all that, there's this whole

48:33 There is a

48:34 I want to show you something.

48:43 VIDISHA (?) So that's it.

48:47 PRAYAS (?) Wow.

48:50 W DON (?) Love you. [?]

48:52 Well wait, w where is that from?

48:56 VIDISHA That's

49:00 So it's a picture which kind of like travelled that this is like he kept his dead wife as a glas i in a glass coffee table.

49:08 W DON (?) Mm-

49:10 VIDISHA So that's what that picture is. It's like his dead wife.

49:15 PRAYAS But is that true or is that

49:18 PRAYAS (?) This is in Arizona.

49:21 PRAYAS (?) Okay.

49:23 W DON (?) Okay.

49:27 VIDISHA So I mean initially when probably this image went viral, people thought that's actually what happened. And of course there were like so there were like other stories which kind of went around this image about oh, this is only them posing for fun. Like so it's just like people drinking and then posing as like the dead wife, or he actually preserved it for that long and then he was arrested or something for doing that. So yeah, that's the dead wife as far as

50:02 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, but I mean it was not an ordinary event, right? It went viral. So I mean that's what I'm saying. If anyone ever did it won't be an ordinary oh wow, that's someone using a dead body as furniture.

50:19 VIDISHA (?) Mm-

50:21 W DON (?) So when we say the dead wife furniture does that have presence?

50:29 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean definitely I think dead bodies have such a strong and differing presence than let's say any other live person. But I think a dead body has all dead bodies no, they don't, right? So all dead bodies have a different presence, right? So they're they don't all feel the same. But then I'm not even sure if

50:54 VIDISHA (?) We don't feel anything. What do they have reflexes for a little bit, that's it.

51:02 PRAYAS No, dead bodies don't feel anything, but we feel something that someone is dead in the room.

51:06 VIDISHA Whereas the same thing with the mug. I don't give a shit about your mug, maybe you do.

51:12 PRAYAS No, but the mug doesn't give a shit. But you g but okay, what I'm saying is

51:19 VIDISHA (?) The dead girl doesn't give a shit.

51:21 PRAYAS Of course it doesn't because it's dead. But I'm saying that let's say you have a dog, you have you have ten dogs in the room and you have one dead body in the room. Now can you just can you just pass through the room as if it's totally an ordinary room and

51:44 Yes.

51:44 Can just ignore the dead body.

51:50 You go to meet your friend and there is a dead body on the in the room, can you just ignore it and ask about popcorn and about a movie?

51:57 VIDISHA So when I go to meet my friend I'm not gonna ignore the dead body. But when I am again in my dream at the war zone, there are so many dead bodies I have to ignore all of them.

52:08 PRAYAS (?) But people who have died in your dream, you didn't know them as living people.

52:13 VIDISHA Talking about if there was a real war I was at, I can I cannot I do not have the time to bother about a dead body. So dead body depends. Like dead body doesn't make a mind. [?] It's like the cup doesn't become yours unless you buy it. When they are on the shelves at a supermarket, they are just on the shelves at the supermarket. So you ignore them.

52:36 PRAYAS So you are saying that if it is a stranger's dead body, if it's some stranger's dead body, then most probably you wouldn't feel a thing.

52:48 VIDISHA No, I'm just saying where I find it. When I find it like in hospital or something like that. Like the other day I was at the hospital again because I was doing the anesthesia. there were like this meeting of there was a meeting of like certain people who are like the cleaning staff for a particular unit in the hospital. So different medi in medical schools there are different units for different kind of treatments. and the unit was just like, oh, so we need like to hire

more people and so we need like two people who can clean that particular corridor area. We need two people who can like take the garbage to like the NDMC place and we need two people who can pick up those dead bodies. So yeah, it's extremely normal to say something like that in a situation like this. So when you see a dead body there, it's fine.

53:49 PRAYAS I mean it's fine in the sense you don't feel anything.

53:53 VIDISHA No.

53:56 W DON (?) Oh.

53:59 VIDISHA Once I actually was on a on one of these you know like the it has like a lot of has created like lot of like these religious yatras or journeys and you walk there for real like miles and miles to get there. So I was at one of these which was at a really high what do you call it high it was a very high mountain peak and we were walking we were w climbing these stairs or whatever like the like a path and it's so high at it's such a high altitude that you can't breathe. So they have a lot of like these oxygen places like tents where you can go and sit and get oxygen because you can't breathe in. But you have walking there after like a long days of getting there. and Of course, the person I mean chosen you to. So anyway, so you get there and he was trying to make way because it's also extremely crowded. It's extremely crowded, it's extremely cold, people are totally like it's like everybody is pushing each other, people are still trying to be in lines. So there was a guy who so basically he died because of the high altitude, and his dead body is being carried in front of us, and we basically just walked behind that dead body because you know how when they walked with the dead body, they just kept saying dead body, dead body, so people made way for them. So at that time we were not like, yes, sure, this guy is dead, but what do I do with it? So we just basically walked behind the dead body only so that we could be at a little I mean we could go through the pass through the crowd.

55:47 PRAYAS So you're saying that anything that we might assume as being an automatic or a natural way to

55:58 Yeah.

55:58 Way of sensing a dead body is just social or cultural baggage. It doesn't really have anything to do with the physical sensing.

56:11 Yeah.

56:11 You don't think yeah, that's what he's saying. Okay.

56:16 So

56:18 VIDISHA Yeah, because I mean dead bodies are used for so many different things. Like it's a tradition of like so many different like or most of the organizations which kind of are built which kind of have kept a certain legacy or keep a certain human being as a currency. They continue whenever that person dies, that opportunity is actually used to so his body is brought to the office to raise funds for fundraising. And that's what the body is used for. Because it's he is the currency and his legacy is what is going to be used as a currency for a certain region. And this is I mean, this I've seen of course with a lot of like left

57:03 PRAYAS Right, because I mean the story of religion is in that sense the solio the story of selling dead bodies.

57:12 Yeah.

57:14 W DON Well, and living bodies too.

57:18 W DON (?) What do you say now?

57:19 PRAYAS Who are who are channeling dead bodies? Living bodies who are channeling dead bodies.

57:28 Right.

57:30 PRAYAS (?) No, what's up the Empress? [?]

57:32 No, I was saying so living bodies who channel dead bodies. So like a priest or a pope is in the sense drawing his authority from the fact that he's in some kind of reception of something from someone who's essentially died and then of course it's also the larger belief system which

I find ridiculous of actually believing in any life after death. I mean that is almost I don't understand how that

58:14 VIDISHA (?) And how I don't know how perfectly rational human beings can accept that at face value.

58:26 PRAYAS (?) No? I mean I don't know. I find that ridiculous.

58:31 W DON D it does not seem natural and that's it, right?

58:36 W DON (?) It's not a natural.

58:37 VIDISHA True.

58:41 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean how so far as how we understand life and death to right, then I mean I've never even thought of what life after death might be because that we don't even know enough about life and death as it is. Then life after death is just another twist to the whole story. I mean I just I just don't get it.

59:04 PRAYAS (?) Yeah, these levels.

59:06 VIDISHA (?) Huh?

59:07 PRAYAS (?) I have to show you something. Give me a second.

59:10 Okay. So there is some there is some other joke. So I yeah, I was for a moment I was deluded in thinking that you actually found what I was saying funny.

59:24 VIDISHA (?) He

59:26 PRAYAS (?) That's what I thought too.

59:30 PRAYAS (?) And I was wondering whether I wanted to laugh or not.

59:37 W DON Okay, what is this?

59:39 W DON (?) This is

59:40 PRAYAS Too small, yeah. Is heaven real?

59:45 PRAYAS (?) It means that.

59:47 To keep saying something for it to be on screen.

59:51 VIDISHA (?) Oh, okay. So can you hear me now? Yeah. This is great.

59:55 PRAYAS (?) Yeah.

59:56 VIDISHA So this is a Harvard neurosurgeon who confirms that la after life exists. And this is like a recent article which has come out and he's just like, Oh, I was about to die or something like that. I read it a long time ago.

01:00:13 But yeah, so I mean it's a neurosurgeon who's trying to prove this same I don't know why is he trying to prove that.

01:00:23 PRAYAS Yeah.

01:00:24 VIDISHA I think he was in coma or something, I don't know.

01:00:28 PRAYAS Yeah, it might just be to because he's a zombie. I mean in the sense that he's already died but he still needs to collect some money and for that he needs to prove that he's alive.

01:00:42 VIDISHA (?) So you might be a something.

01:00:44 VIDISHA (?) I believe that.

01:00:47 PRAYAS (?) I take that.

01:00:50 VIDISHA (?) It's ten thirty.

01:00:52 PRAYAS (?) Yes.

01:00:54 W DON (?) Is it ten thirty already?

01:00:56 PRAYAS Yeah. I th but you know I think largely this discussion has is very in I mean it I don't know if I think we should make this a whole study group at Surfatial and really it needs a few more days and few more people to actually thrash it out. But the whole presence and whatever the question I think we should make it

01:01:23 Expand it so that we can figure it out more and yeah Don so we'll I mean I'll set it up I'll check with you for dates and Vidisha I'll set check with you for dates and we'll have to keep investigating. I don't know. Because I don't feel like I we are anywhere right now.

01:01:41 W DON (?) Oh yeah, we're nowhere right now. We're just, you know, staring at the dead bodies.

01:01:46 PRAYAS Yeah.

01:01:48 VIDISHA I love the

01:01:49 Furniture, I think it's great.

01:01:51 VIDISHA (?) What's that?

01:01:52 W DON (?) I love dead body furniture. It's so good.

01:01:57 PRAYAS Yeah, that might actually be a ready made art object which might be ready to

01:02:03 Mm.

01:02:03 You know, fetishize and sell for a big sum of money. we could we could try and get some artists to do it.

01:02:13 VIDISHA No, we should just have a line. We should just like have a line and be like people

01:02:18 PRAYAS (?) Could actually kill people.

01:02:22 VIDISHA No, it depends. I mean if our demand increases and if we are offering a particular kind of product, then we gotta kill people.

01:02:31 PRAYAS Or we have to ask people to volunteer. Yeah, we have to ask people to volunteer dying. Like, do you feel that life has no meaning? Do you feel

01:02:40 VIDISHA (?) Cas people actually do you would fucking find people? [?]

01:02:43 W DON Hilarious.

01:02:46 PRAYAS Yeah, I mean we could actually put it out there. Okay, see you. So we should wrap up for tonight.

01:02:54 PRAYAS (?) Okay.

01:02:55 W DON (?) Yeah. Good night. Good night. Bye.

01:02:58 Yeah. Because remember when you're asleep you're a dead body too.

01:03:02 W DON (?) Yeah.

01:03:06 PRAYAS (?) Okay, bye guys, it was great.

01:03:08 PRAYAS (?) Yeah. Good night.

01:03:10 PRAYAS (?) Good night.