



ATTENTION and the DISCIPLINE OF CARE (with Eva Nagao) 4 November 2022

10:48:24 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

HOW TO ATTEND FROM OVERWHELM TO COLLECTIVE CARE

10:50:50 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

In today's meeting, we are going to talk about practices of attention as a way to move from overwhelm to engaged practices of collective care...

11:01:01 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone:

David! Good to see you again...

11:02:35 From David Landes to Everyone:

hello!

11:13:41 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

What is PIC?

11:14:23 From Cody Upton to Everyone:

Prison industrial complex?

11:14:31 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

Aaah probably

11:15:08 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

The following will be questions for our coming BREAKOUT ROOM:

11:19:44 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

Choose a "Big Scary Thing" that attracts your attention (attention crisis, political division, PIC, climate change, etc). How and where do you perceive this BST? What is the quality of this attention (deep, fragmented, agitated, curious, etc.)? What is your emotional experience?

11:31:41 From Brad Fox to Everyone:

Raiane, Bonnie

Raiane: uneven distribution of resources on the planet, attention is frantic, angry (almost), sometimes I wallow, unproductive, sometimes I avoid it, with shame and guilt and anger. Sometimes when i'm grounded and connected I feel hope that there's enough for everybody.

Bonnie: It's hard to choose, every time I read the news or check social media or talk there's something—climate change, racial injustice. My generation is bombarded, it makes me anxious, so I avoid it sometimes, or I think what is closer at hand: I have to go to class, I'm not in Ukraine.

Brad: such injustices, it feels like a multi-generational long-term equation that is simply playing out, and though we may choose to engage, to try to understand, the trajectories are greater and appear totally intractable.

Raiane: we are but a drop in the ocean.

11:31:51 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

Peter: Climate change as attention-fragmented - I look and then feel overwhelmed and frantic.

11:32:25 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

Justin: State of educational systems, and how priorities have shifted within the structures - and what this means long term

11:33:23 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

What was interesting was that we had a hard time talking about what issues we focused on without acknowledging how social media targeting filters that content "for us".

11:34:02 From Anthony Acciavatti to Everyone:

Our group discussed BSTs like: Bodily autonomy, climate change, education. Questions about the here and now as well as future scenarios were discussed.

11:34:03 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

We were talking about how budgets for public education have been slashed while money for the PIC goes up. Why is education seen as a "government" expense while police and prison budgets are not described or imagined that way. "Small government" politics leads to huge state institutions in the form of police and prisons.

11:34:29 From elena radice to Everyone:

me mentioned as BTS the coexistence of different BTS events

11:34:37 From elena radice to Everyone:

we*

11:35:18 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

We also talked briefly about cultivating the attention of incarcerated people as a part of how rehabilitaiton is supposed to work. Do we see this cultivation of attention as an abolitionist task--or rather as too caught up within reform ideology?

11:35:52 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

Homelessness in NYC — doing life histories with homeless folks, paying attention to their stories and what they love and care about, helps to ground me and also see different angles on the problem that I hadn't anticipated (like the prevalence of trauma and thinking through the relationship of that to housing, evictions etc)

11:35:58 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

With Masami, yes and also there is so much that's bad right now, it's almost impossible to find a single focus. This is an age of hopelessness. Attention is divided.

11:36:10 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Ha Kristin jinx on hopelessness

11:36:29 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

lol

11:36:51 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

I wonder if all this badness is rooted in the same sources (global capitalism, Liberalism, etc.)

11:36:54 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

Interesting that people use “hopelessness”, which is a lack of hope, vs “despair”, which is often defined as the opposite of hope

11:37:08 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Federica’s BST was around syringes (drugs) in metro system — attention as vigilance — fear as emotional experience. My BST was around territorial fights and murders of indigenous communities, which I experience as NOT part of my immediate life in the city, but when I do (in spiritual experiences or news) it comes super strong and profound, spurring a lot of sadness

11:37:24 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

@Masami, agreed. I’ve been thinking a lot about that contrast.

11:38:19 From Kristin Lawler to Everyone:

@Jesse yes

11:38:29 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

I wonder how theories of epigenetics over generations changes attention

11:38:46 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

BREAKOUT #2: Imagine the block where you live (or look out the window). In your daily life, what effects of your "Big Scary Thing" do you notice on your block? What is the quality of this attention (deep, fragmented, agitated, curious, etc.)? What is your emotional experience of the effects on your block?

11:39:58 From Caleb Smith to Everyone:

This is a good exercise!

11:47:32 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

Last comment from our group. How do we reshape and remap through attention - given the example that peter works with homeless people in grand central station giving food, and now he has a completely different look of this space.

11:48:01 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

can we bring solutions such as these into some of the other BST’s

11:48:09 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

I shared about the city horizon blocking my view from the mountains I know there are indigenous communities, and also all the buildings under which I know there are original rivers — and as before also lots of sadness

11:48:18 From Brad Fox to Everyone:

Brad: I see my building, part of a city program to provide affordable housing, which has ended up having the reverse effect that was intended—it ends up making it difficult for people without any kind of generational wealth to get in.

Raiane: How warm it is in New York City today, like it might be September. The impact that we’ve made collectively. We are not going to be able to sort out who did what and what impact it might have had when it doesn’t work for anybody.

Bonnie: It doesn’t seem there’s a concentrated effort to address anything. Nothing has been effective.

11:48:35 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

@Ana, thanks for Lula! <3 a bit of hope..

11:48:50 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

Henry shared about the weird political translation of indigenous causes into bumper stickers (that’s what stuck out for me haha)

11:49:00 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Gentrification was a big theme in our room (w/ Masami and Elena)

11:49:32 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

@Jesse, yes!! but also, bolsonarismo (those who follow Bolsonaro's fascism) hasn't died at all!!!
so lots of BST still

11:50:14 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Bolsonaro has learned a lot from the Trump playbook and vice versa.

11:50:14 From Raiane Cantisano (she/her) to Everyone:

Oof, lots them.

11:50:40 From Preston to Everyone:

Tenderness... Vulnerability to pain and fear... Openness to beauty and connection... What tenderizes you? Why does the heart open and then close? How do we be intimate with all things?

11:51:21 From Stefan Pryce to Everyone:

Have to run. Thank you so much Eva, Lane and Peter

11:51:24 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

Yeah, always wondering how not to be a negative impact to wherever I live.

11:51:44 From Lane to Everyone:

Thank you Stefan!

11:52:46 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

Re: Eva's story... Attention to needs that we don't expect, maybe.... How often do we attend to the *absence* of color??

11:53:11 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

love that

11:54:02 From Carlos Montemayor to Everyone:

Also have to run, thank you!

11:54:27 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

A former student of mind, Anya Farennikova, wrote a philosophy dissertation on "perception of absence". Attention to absence is a great topic, and a political one.

11:54:28 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

what is really the center or one's attention as an activist? was it the process, or the idea, or whatever, instead of the human heart actually there? and then boom, reality sinks in and the dude hasn't seen red in twenty years, something none of the others couldve thought of

11:54:43 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

BREAKOUT #3: Imagine someone you love. How have you noticed this "Big Scary Thing" figuring in their life? What is the quality of this attention (deep, fragmented, agitated, curious, etc.)? What is your emotional experience of this attention?

12:06:47 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

collective practices of grief

12:06:55 From Tyla to Everyone:

yes, justin.

12:07:00 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

@peter

12:07:13 From Tyla to Everyone:

we were talking about the space where tenderness and rage get to co-exist

12:07:44 From Preston to Everyone:

A poem I wrote "about" incarceration and attention:

12:07:47 From Preston to Everyone:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lgXs1-GmSgFVykulbHplvfp2NK7HI2kKJi0OsUWeKCc/edit>

12:07:55 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

@tyla i found and felt anger and sadness simultaneously -so this so spot on.

12:08:38 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

We talked about grief - when I pay attention to something scary and experience grief, my attention is then directed elsewhere. What would it look like to have a practice of attention TO grief?? Cody raised question: how do you grief something that is not immediate to your experience, like "species loss"? What is the scale at which our attention can operate? How often are we mindful to this scale of attention?

12:08:43 From David Landes to Everyone:

During the 2019 political revolution in Beirut, attention was collectively magnetized around the one thing going on in the country. Everything was understood in reference to the one big thing occurring, which happened to be calling for a reboot of the political system, class, and constitution. Such galvanized collective attention has never occurred in USA during my lifetime (9/11 only, but not grassroots political action)

12:09:22 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

We discussed the importance of imagination and creativity in the discourse of scary issues. Folks might see abolition as a lawless world, but rarely do we explain the future that we are really fighting for. However, sometimes when I do describe the future I want, the society I want, people often respond with how "unrealistic

12:09:35 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

**"unrealistic" it is.

12:09:48 From Raiane Cantisano (she/her) to Everyone:

what stuck with me from our group was that when people we love are impacted by what we're looking at, the stakes feel so much higher which can be inspiring and also overwhelming

12:10:10 From Raiane Cantisano (she/her) to Everyone:

depending on how grounded I am

12:10:45 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

We also talked about local work being one of the (only?) ways we can make real impact.

12:12:06 From Peter Schmidt (he/him) to Everyone:

.... suggesting that Practices of attention can enable us to create more sustainable relationships to BST's (Big Scary Things). Choosing to attend as a form of care vs doom scrolling?

12:12:53 From Justin Ginsberg to Everyone:

Love and hugs to everyone! Have to run! Thank you Lane, Eva, Peter!

12:13:16 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

Without getting into specifics, I had a long journey of escaping a "big scary thing", and the journey was purely fueled by fear. As a result, I only superficially escaped, and wish I had the opportunity to imagine the life I actually wanted, and fight for it, instead of just running in fear.

12:13:43 From Henry Schmidt to Everyone:

Someone who I loved reading about these topics, and learned so much from about California and beyond, was Mike Davis, who brought these kinds of multiple attention to his writing (irony, humor, seriousness, sadness, etc.). Just wanted to say that I found out this morning that he just died. Just wanted to note that for a moment... 😊

12:13:45 From rebecca to Everyone:

This has been a lovely and hopeful extended conversation. Thank you so much for the uplift!

12:14:56 From elena radice to Everyone:

same for me, thank you truly for this energy and shared thoughts <3

12:15:10 From Ana Marques to Everyone:

i really liked eva's notion that it is this attentive and personal care amongst organizers/activists that will sustain the attention & action towards different BSTs throughout time

12:16:33 From Raiane Cantisano (she/her) to Everyone:

Yesss Ana. Otherwise it's just more of the same, bypassing our humanity and joy in service of something "bigger" hasn't been working haha

12:17:11 From Eva Nagao (she/her) to Everyone:

Thank you all for your time today. This is a wonderful, hopeful space.

12:17:26 From Masami (she/her) to Everyone:

Not that sexy

12:17:27 From Jesse Prinz to Everyone:

Thanks Lane, Eva, and Peter. Great to see everyone.

12:30:04 From Peter Schmidt to Everyone: Everyone : thanks everyone