

Language Games Seminar #2 - Broadcasting and status - Transcript

This seminar was given on 18th May 2020. This is an auto-generated transcript with many errors.

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Welcome to language games. This is the second of three seminars about language about communication. And about I guess digital communication or or how we communicate on the internet. And the first seminar was all about performativity and emotions and you can see that video I think, on the open school lease website, if you just kind of have a look at the language games page on that site, you can find a Vimeo link but today we are talking about broadcasting Oh, and I want to do something before we start. Okay, I want you to repeat what you hear. Okay. Yeah.

1:00

[Beeping noises, then beeping from participants]

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Okay, cool. Thank you very much. That was pretty nice. So beautiful to hear one singular. This talk is called broadcasting and status. Broadcasting, that kind of definition of broadcasting is to distribute audio or video content using some kind of technology normally electronic communication technology. And I'm going to talk about broadcasting in a real kind of technical sense. And also I'm gonna expand the notion of broadcasting to help us think about it as well to use it as a kind of metaphor or a lens through which we can think about other things and beyond kind of traditional forms of broadcasting. The reason I think that's a useful technique or a fun or interesting thing to do, because broken Casting has some really nice features. Firstly, broadcasting always has a transmitter and a receiver. So you're always immediately thinking not only about the thing that's doing but the thing that's receiving, which is as is or people who are trying to make things quite interesting. Maybe it also connects back to that idea of performativity. And thinking about how performances or act are interpreted and language is interpreted. So there's always a transmission and reception going on in broadcasting, we normally think of broadcasting as flows of content of some kind, so video or audio, but we could also think about it metaphorically is flows of attention, or flows of labor, or desire. So we can have, you know, kind of broadcasting as a way of thinking about all sorts of things flowing between transmitters and receivers. The other thing that's good about broadcasting as a idea is it always presupposes that there's some kind of broadcasting medium and broadcasting isn't it? Kind of transparent interface for whatever you're broadcasting, you know, whatever is kind of being transmitted has to go through something. So when we think about an event or an art form as a form of broadcasting, we're already thinking about the technologies, the techniques, the ways in which it's being broadcast. The reason I've kind of called it broadcasting and status is because each broadcast model, and that's how I'm going to structure the talk, I'm going to talk about different broadcast models implies a certain status relationship, or different ways of thinking about status relationships, some of those might be hierarchical, and imply a kind of a

distribution of power or a distribution of agency. And some of those might be more kind of more neutral, just implying different roles for different parts of the network, or different parts of the model. So last time, I really liked in the chat of the, the seminar last time, you guys were kind of suggesting things or contributing ideas and I really Like for that to happen again, and at the end of the session, we'll kind of go back through the chat and use that for the basis of our discussion. So if you have any questions, put them in the chat, if you have any examples that I haven't thought of them, put them in the chat. And if you just have any thoughts at all, or want to use it as a form of notetaking, then I'd be really interested in that being a kind of parallel broadcast, I guess, to the one that we're doing right now. And the really important thing as well, I guess, in terms of the project, is that at the moment, because of the dominance of digital communication, a lot of our interactions are broadcast. So this seminar, for example, would normally take place in a room with some tables and chairs and a projector maybe, and that would be the way we do this. But of course, because of the Coronavirus and the lockdown, we're having to do it through a very specific broadcast medium. And I don't know if anyone came to the last seminar but we did that on Google meet an hour on zoom. we've switched over for technical reasons. But that's interesting to think about what These different kinds of corporate own technologies, what possibilities they offer us. So first up, we have one to many broadcast. This is the oga of broadcast. This is the original form of broadcasting. This is what the word broadcasting technically means. It's a one to many broadcast in which there's one transmitter and many receivers. And if we think about status relationships, then the transmitter is the active agent or actor in the network. And the receivers are passive. So you have a situation in which the transmitter is controlling everything. Everything about the broadcast is coming from one institution or person or a set of ideas as a kind of Active Passive split as well.

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You might associate these with traditional Mass Media Communications, like radio and television, and these are the dominant broadcast formats of the 20th century. And still, obviously hold sway over public opinion. You can also use one too many to think about older forms of media like newspapers. So they're not broadcast. Obviously, it's not taking place through an electronic communication medium, but it is a one to many kind of communication in which one object is being distributed. So the same information is being distributed to thousands, potentially millions of people. And even cinema, you might say was a was a one to many kind of broadcast. Of course, again, it's not a broadcast literally. But it's the same object that's being distributed. And all of those forms of, well, let's call them broadcasts, newspapers, cinema, TV, radio, they're really associated with 20th century politics, right? So if you think of, well, this this film is Battleship Potemkin, and it's a Soviet film is a great piece of art but also a piece of, I guess, Soviet propoganda, spreading the ideals of socialism. And class revolution. And the BBC, of course, is a news organization and a entertainment provider but it's also a kind of soft power arm of the British state. You can see this now in the Boris Boris Johnson's government was very reluctant to engage with traditional broadcast media up until the Coronavirus hit. So they wouldn't go on things like the today program, which had traditionally been a staple for politicians to appear and be interviewed on the Today program on radio four. But they've started these daily briefings and the Prime Minister even has done these kind of pre recorded briefings, which

are very much one to many they're top down. They're not social media, there's no kind of engagement with feedback or kind of question and answers. The daily briefings are slightly different, of course, they've got the journalists in. So even in the time of many to many communication, which we'll talk about next, even in the time of social media and the internet, one to many broadcasts. Through kind of very traditional, you know, television radio is still very important and very powerful. The other thing that can happen is that one too many can be kind of hacked out of many too many systems. So you think about powerful individuals and how they use social media. I chose Adele just because I knew the story of Adele social media. And I've written about Adele, before Adele and normativity. before. So she has you can see her Instagram page where she has 37 million followers, which she follows no one. That means that she's using a many to many network so she's using Instagram or social media, and many to many broadcasting model to do a one to many broadcast. She's not taking in she's not acting as a receiver. She's only the transmitter. So that of course implies a kind of power imbalance between the people who follow Adele and the she doesn't follow anyone at all. So it's very different kind of a hack of many to many systems. many to many broadcasting is the other form of broadcasting, which should hit can adhere to that technical definition of electronic mass communication. It's made possible by specific technologies, but essentially the ability of website users and users on the internet to put information back into a system. So web 2.0 it might have been called at one point or social media. But essentially things like file sharing, blogging, wikis, tagging of content, so it's it's fine double and social media. They're all the kind of technologies that make many to many communication possible many to many broadcast possible in a many to many broadcast model. We're all transmitters and receivers. And in the way I've drawn it here, we all look fairly, equally able to do that transmission in that Reception. But of course, in reality, the landscape within which we're doing that broadcasting is dominated by essentially large companies, although Wikipedia is a not for profit. So Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Google is obviously a huge one that's not here. But even things like Dropbox are part of that. operate

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on that broadcast model, or we transfer stuff like that. So the kind of negative outcomes of this, the negative possibilities of this are things that are called echo chambers and a similar phenomenon called filter bubbles. echo chambers are well, they're very similar, but echo chambers seem to be created more by our own choices on social media. And it's it's a kind of political or an, or a news outcome in which we surround ourselves on social media, with people and I guess, kind of organizations that were interested in that might reflect our own viewpoints. And so the metaphor there is an echo of our own voice coming back towards us. So we never get news that contradicts our viewpoints. We never get opinions that we don't already agree with. We follow. You know, on Twitter, I follow artists, mad Marxists. And like theorists, so I'm always going to get the same kind of information coming back. A filter bubble is slightly different. That's a term coined by Eli Pariser, in 2011. In which, you know, these companies, the algorithms that they use to, I don't know, keep us on their website or to direct us towards certain kinds of content for economic reasons, or, as we'll talk about a bit later, organizations we've kind of shadowy ideological interests, might push certain kinds of news to certain kinds of people in

certain kinds of news to other people. So the example in the PowerPoint here is if you're a right leaning republican probe, person, you're very unlikely to receive information and news about climate change. I got you guys to do some beeping for me at the start. And I've been thinking about echoes and Onomatopoeia and lots of things. So I was thinking about the echo metaphor in echo chambers. And I was thinking how echo chambers aren't. They aren't a real technology. You might record the echo or the acoustics of a, of a concert hall or a church something with it with really beautiful Echo, but there isn't really as far as I know, like a technology that is an echo chamber, but there is an anechoic chamber. And I thought it was an interesting kind of counterpoint to the idea of echo chambers because in an anechoic chamber, you have soundproofing, that stops you being able to hear any kind of reverberation at all right? So if you said something you would have almost a completely dead sound, flat sound without any reverb or echo. And in an anechoic chamber, what happens is that you are Start to hear things that you wouldn't normally be able to hear. So you're actually able to hear your own heartbeat. Some people have described hearing their own nerves fizzing. And other people talk about hearing the rhythm of your pulse. So it's interesting that in an echo chamber you hear yourself in a kind of banal way. But in an anechoic chamber, you hear yourself in an uncanny or weird way. So one to one broadcasts from now on, these aren't real broadcasting technologies. These are kind of possible models or, or speculative models. I guess there are technologies that are one to one broadcasting, there's telephone calls or texting, they could be thought of as a one to one broadcast. But I was thinking about how you might think about face to face communication as a one to one broadcast. I imagine when we get back to some kind of normality, we're able to meet up with friends, we're going to be thinking about the medium of face to face communication, the technologies of face to face communication a lot more than we did before. It's going to be made strange by a kind of enforced lockdown So pinging is a network function where one computer can check I'm going to explain this a real non technical way. So apologies if I just get it wrong, one computer can check that another computer is accessing the same network by sending a really tiny packet of data, which is called a ping. So you can see here, it's only 32 bytes, which is tiny. Most computers these days, have hard drives that are terabytes large, so many, many orders of magnitude larger, larger than that. And the ping is sent out from one computer. And the only information it contains is what's called an echo request. So requests for that packet to be sent back to the original computer. And the ping time is the time that it takes to be sent out and to be received again, it's used for troubleshooting. It's used for testing whether your router is accessing the internet, stuff like that. The really nice thing for me is that because the packet of data is so tiny, it measures physical distance much more accurately than it does The speed of the internet. So a ping sent from London to Japan will still take much longer than a ping sent to London to Birmingham even if the internet speed is terrible between London but Birmingham, so it's much more about physical distance. So even though we're operating in the realm of computing technology, we're still operating in the realm of kind of physically defined space.

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Now obviously ping is named after something, and it's named after the sound of a sonar because the sonar uses a pulse of sound, and an echo to measure real distance, so it's obviously kind of taking this metaphor of the Raider. The word ping is an automatic pick word

that is it sounds like the thing it's trying to describe. So pings beeps, even animal sounds like Moo. Worth tweet. They will automatically pick words and I've been thinking about how interesting Onomatopoeia is. As a word creation format, that's not how we normally create words we don't create words that sound or appear to be similar to the thing that they're trying to describe. And in a way, Onomatopoeia is an echo function of language because we were kind of trying to mimic what we hear and our imperfect mimicking, create something that can be rendered in, you know, using our speech boxes. We'll talk about targeted advertising quite a lot. I'm just going to show a sequence of kind of targeted advert examples. This is something me and Sam Mercer did a project for years ago about interruptions and interruption as a kind of creative technique, but also an economic technique within the attention economy. We'll talk about the attention economy. The next seminar This is this example is from a kind of blog that went viral quite a few years ago where the writer used a targeting function On Facebook to send very very, very specific targeted ads to one person to his housemate essentially just to prank him. So his housemate was a sword swallower who couldn't swallow pills. So he set up this. You can see there's a, he set up a targeting group of just one person and then started sending adverts to his housemate without his housemate realizing what was going on. Is it funny, sorry, you can Google it and read the whole kind of blog. But when I was looking for this, I found all these blogs about sniper targeting. So this kind of one person targeting and these are marketing blogs. So this is in pranking this is you know, legit people trying to get people to buy their products by, you know, doing this kind of creepy targeting to one person. And I thought it was interesting because in the last seminar, we're talking about performativity and Judith Butler's ideas of performativity in relation to gender. Sometimes it's hard to know why the world culture certain political formats are so interested in there being two genders and us adhering to the categories of gender that are provided for us. And this is just one tiny example of why people really like the idea there are only being men and women. To use this sniper targeting these days, you have to put in over 20 email addresses, you can't just put in one anymore. And every single one of these marketing blogs that talk talks about them. The way to get around this and to target one person is to put in 19 email addresses of people who identify as female, if and if you want to target a male then just put in that one email address of the man. And then you can select to target just men in your group. So gender is really important to you know, even kind of these tiny niche techniques of, of hyper specific marketing marketing. And then finally, people might be aware of this, but there's been a bit of a split in the Labour Party, a minor, a minor split in the labor fight for the last few years between Jeremy Corbyn, and the kind of left of the party and then the hoots who took over the leadership, and then the right of the party who are maybe more kind of associated with the New Labour era. But they have control of the party machinery. And it turns out according to various reports that have come out that the right wing of the party sabotage the left Well, they sabotage their own party within the general election in 2017, but also 2019. And in 2017, they did it with targeted Facebook ads. So Jeremy Corbyn and his team was put out a certain set of adverts, and the right wing who controlled the actual, you know, campaign office, didn't put those adverts out and instead put out their own campaign. But to trick Jeremy Corbyn and his kind of group into thinking that they had followed orders, they targeted them using Facebook targeting. So they tricked them into thinking that the Facebook campaign had been run. So it goes From,

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you know a little prank that kind of goes viral on the internet to marketing technique to being used kind of disinformation and political sub sabotage basically. Okay, so many to one, many to one broadcasting is only really possible in a many to many network. And it's when many transmitters are focused on one receiver. Now obviously the power dynamics of this a complex it could be that the we'll see when I talk about the examples, how it could be that the power lies with the money or the power lies with the one. So you could also have kind of fake fake use of it like faking the idea of having kind of many to many communication within a one to many network. So at the downs Downing Street broadcasts, in which the prime minister and government advisors talk about the Coronavirus briefing, they started introducing questions from people members of the public, but of course, these are having be vetted to ensure that there's no kind of upset. So journalists are allowed to ask question, and then they get a random member of the public, as though that makes us feel like we're kind of equal in an equal relationship with the government. But of course, for a lot of us, it just highlights how distant our rulers are from us. So another version of this is asked me anything. This is a Reddit feature in which the famous ones are celebrities, celebrities will go on Reddit, and they will put so it's Jerry Seinfeld and Arnold Schwarzenegger I put up here. I couldn't find many women who don't ask me anything. And Reddit users can ask them anything. And they're deemed more or less successful depending on how willing the celebrity is to engage with that format. But of course, the power dynamic lies with the celebrity here. They're the famous person, they can probably ignore questions they don't want to answer. And they finished the session if they're not bothered about answering. normal people do these as well. People who've had kind of strange experiences public shaming, of course, is a very different situation in which the power lies with the many and not with the one. There's a book by Jon Ronson called. So you think you've been publicly shamed from 2012. It's quite interesting. As a few examples, I thought I'd just use this example because it's quite simple. This is a woman named Lindsay stone. She used to work with adults with learning disabilities. And on one trip to Washington, DC a work trip with the adults with learning disabilities, the users of this charity that she used to work for her and a friend went there walking around the Arlington National Cemetery, which is a kind of military cemetery in Washington DC. And they had a running joke in which they would smoke in front of no smoking signs or mimic the poses of statues, just kind of stupid pictures, and then they'd upload them to Facebook. And at the Arlington Cemetery, they saw the silence and respect sign. And Lindsey pretended to shout and stick up middle finger. But what happened was the person who took the photo a guy called her friend called Jamie posted it on Facebook, his settings weren't set to private, and someone got hold of the picture. And it went viral. And then people were really angry at her. They were really offended by the picture, which is obviously a joke, but just maybe not the best joke not the funniest joke, but still out of context, it seems very disrespectful. And someone started a fire Lindsey stone Facebook group, which got 17,000 likes. And this is some of the comments from that Facebook group. You should rot in hell, just pure evil. After they fire her. Maybe she needs to sign up as a client, implying that she, for some reason has learning disabilities for being disrespectful. Send the dumb feminist to prison. There are also death and rape threats which are obviously very common when women. Women are

kind of being publicly shamed online. So she did actually lose her job. She was fired from a job and it took her about 18 months to find another job. So it's this thing where like, when something spirals within a many to many network, it can go one way obviously there's viral fame people get famous for a tweet or a video or whatever. But it can also go the other way. So the opposite of public shaming is adulation. This chick Jaffe is Captain now Colonel Tom Moore. He was a 99 year old captain and is now hundred year old Colonel. He decided he wanted to raise some money for this is very recently This is in the Coronavirus time since 2012 he decided he wanted to raise some money for NHS charities never been quite sure what that is because NHS is tax funded health service, not a charity. He decided he wanted to raise some money for the NHS.

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So I think he walked like 100 I'm gonna get the details wrong. You will Like 100 laps of his back garden and raised looking to raise 1000 pounds but it went viral he ended up raising 30 million pounds that is a lot of money. And then he this kind of unpredictable flow of attention turned into adulation, hero worship. And people kind of started jumping on the bandwagon. So Michael boo, the singer, I guess entertainer, did this collaboration with the captain

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with the NHS, [video plays] But then the real reason I were to show this was adulation can take many strange forms. I found this on meme page that I follow. So this was from a Facebook group called sing Happy Birthday for Captain Tom Moore. And it says just finished this animation sending Tom back in time to Burma. Which is where he was in. He was in the army in World War Two, and he was in a motorbike regimen. So this guy made this animation. [animation plays]

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Stop by the tree. It's

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just really like that. So it's kind of many, many networks offer the opportunity for very strange outcomes because sometimes people focus in on something that traditional kind of broadcast networks wouldn't kind of focus in on. So lots of user generated content that's got this strange feeling. I said that people could I sent out like a kind of little reading list. And one of the things I sent was a video by Daniel Keller all about targeted individuals and sovereign individuals. And I think they're really interesting ideas, so I'll just kind of run through them. So the sovereign individual, is an idea posited in this book, the sovereign individual, which is written by to neoliberal, I guess, kind of economists or political theorists. And it's all about mastering the transition to the information age. So essentially, they're writing they're writing in the late 90s. But but it kind of pre predates the disruption that happened in the 2000s. When things like social media and essentially news on the internet information on the internet disrupted the one to many broadcast model which has dominated for so long. And in this landscape, this figure of the sovereign individual has access to all these different places where they can get their information and they're no longer beholden to things like BBC or a single newspaper. You know, they get

their news from all over the world and from lots of different places they can compare it, they can pick and choose what they listen to. And they can become a kind of Master of that information and use it to get ahead. That's the idea. And, of course, what's actually happened in this landscape is that certain companies have come to dominate the, you know, social media or the news landscape, that Daniel Keller talks about the idea that we, we haven't had the same Google search results for years like we're each personalized. He talks about filter bubbles, and echo chambers. And then of course, there's the kind of opaque institutions that wants to influence what information we have access to. These examples are really good, shadowy interests, like Cambridge Analytica who are interested in kind of helping certain individuals or causes win elections. Russian trolling in the US presidential election astroturfing. So comments Who paid by the, you know, kind of oil companies to post pro fossil fuel messages, things like that. So it's actually quite hard to get this kind of clean signal, there's a lot of noise being transmitted. And us as you know this, if we were to really be sovereign individuals, we need to kind of clear a path through that noise. Now most of us do manage to kind of find a bit of a way of dealing with that most of us probably don't subscribe to conspiracy theories or get tempted by clickbait. But an increasing number of people are less and less able to process all this information. So he talks about the targeted individual. Now, the targeted individual isn't a hypothetical figure itself. It's a name that a group of people call themselves and to be clear, targeted individuals are essentially people who are suffering from paranoid delusions. So they, they're the ultimate conspiracy theorists callicles them in which everyone is conspiring against them. And they're the same subject of harassment by huge organizations like the CIA or the American government, or, you know, a huge company, and they feel like they're being followed all the time. They feel like mind control weapons are directed at them, like all their communication is monitored. Now, of course, what's interesting, in a kind of metaphorical way, is that they're not entirely wrong, right. Since the Edward Snowden revelations, we have realized that governments are they have got a backdoor into social media and they are collecting all of our information for their own interest. But I guess the point is, the reality is they're probably not using it to target individuals. But as a figure, he talks about them as the dark mirror of the sovereign individual. So like the sovereign individual is like one possibility of our mass information. You know, the time we live in, and the targeted individual is the kind of dark reflection of it 100 completely control and one who has no control whatsoever, not even over and over their own thoughts. What's weird is that targeted individuals have become kind of they've grouped together and they're now offering support groups for each other, in which they all kind of indulge each other's delusions. And they're becoming a political group as well. So in Richmond in California, they managed to get the city council to ban space weapons for mind control.

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So this kind of delusional mindset has this kind of tiny grain of truth in the sense that we are being watched, but not in the way that these people think. But it kind of is enough to turn them into a like a have an effect on kind of political realities. Okay, so now we're going to get quite speculative. I was thinking about broadcast models in which one person or one thing is broadcasting But there is no audience. So I was thinking about this in terms of being an artist.

When you're researching, when you're in your studio making work without thinking about an audience or without thinking about an outcome, I was thinking about all the Google Docs I have on my computer, all the tabs open on my browser, all the voice notes on my phone that no one will ever hear. I think about flow states in which you're absorbed in a task without thinking about the outcome, at which time seems to kind of disappear. The example I have chosen is actually nothing to do with any of that. So lots of places have had to close because of lock downs. You know, no visitors to museums, no visitors to shops, that kind of thing. But zoos are really interesting because you have all of these you know, economic interests. That institution the zoo is a business pouring money into paying for food for care. zookeepers, and then obviously those zookeepers directly interact with the animals. But then normally there's this extra flow in which like, the animals are there for a reason. And the reason is to make money right? So visitors come along, and they pay money to come into the zoo and they walk around the zoo and they look at the animals and the animals see them. But the point is always the visitors the endpoint of this flow of kind of money, desire attention work, and it kind of congeals in the in the visitor, but without visitors the endpoint is the animals so there's been all these stories about animals into so animals in zoos lonely without visitors. This is great. garden ales are forgetting about humans. So a Japanese Zoo or aquarium series put iPads in the tanks and you can FaceTime the eels. I'm going to go into this in a bit more detail. What's really fascinating about this is that those garden eels would normally disappear under the sand when they saw something approaching. But because they got used to visitors, they were happy. kind of stay in the water. And this facilitated their care because it meant that the keepers of the aquarium and the people who looked after the eels could come along and they could check the eels for lice, and that's a big danger to the eels is getting these lice. And when the zoo or the aquarium was busy, the zookeeper could just go up to the tank, have a look and be like, okay, no lice, then we're okay. But because there aren't any visitors, the gardener's forgot about humans, and they're getting scared every time the zookeepers come along. So this is a weird solution, a kind of very convoluted solution to a problem of care, which has been facilitated kind of by accident through the attention of the visitors. There's some kind of interesting feedback loop there. I think, if visitors can't be there, if visits can't be human, there may be some of the animals can take on that role. So here we have Toronto Zoo where a donkey and alarma went see some polar bears. This is obviously the best one. This is an emperor penguin at the Chicago aquarium as low to these videos. They take them they're taking the emperor penguins around to see all the different tanks These are some beluga whales that is having a look at the beluga whale seems more interested in the penguin than the penguin does in a beluga whale. Lovely. Then I was thinking about no one to one communication. And again, for artists I was thinking about maybe eureka moments or inspiration where ideas seem to appear for from from nowhere. But then I stumbled on this article in The New York Times all about beeps. And this is actually what got me thinking about beeps and pings and Morse code and kind of sub linguistic communication. So the beep is a is a human made sound. There are no animals that beep well. The only animal the beeps is the Roadrunner and it's not a real, you know, it's just cutting. So, you know, cars beep robots, beep phones, beep email beeps, trucks reversing beep, but no animal or no weather. You know, no natural noise beeps so we know that they're entirely individually They're entirely synthetic. But they're also ubiquitous. They're everywhere. They're in all of our electronic

technology can beep. My parents phones, they basically beep every time Yahoo News is updated, you know, like, I think there's the beep is a kind of call for attention that a lot of us find quite tiring. So we might turn off. Sorry, someone said that birds beep now that we've invented and that's true. There's lots of birds that imitate

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electronic sounds they hear, I thought there was a bird. I can't what it's called. But there's a bird that can imitate power tools. And it lives in a zoo somewhere. And it imitates the power tools that it was hearing when the zoo was having some work done. Last time we were talking about performativity, where the content of the language is not the only thing that's taking place and beeps have a performative role. They kind of force us to pay attention for them, right? If something beeps in your house, you turn around you look at it, if it's an honor Expected beep so it kind of demands that we demand that we pay attention. And last time we were talking about discussed and the way that disgust is a performance is manifested as a kind of recoiling or returning away or pushing away from the thing that is disgusting or the thing that we are disgusted by. and attention is the opposite of that we come close for attention we get, we come towards the thing that we want to attend to. So beeps kind of try and ask us to come towards the thing. Okay, last thing is nothing to no one. So of course, this is an entirely speculative model of broadcast. No one would design something to be broadcast like this, but it's interesting to imagine what a nothing to no one broadcast would be when me and Sam so we're doing this research. This was his interest. He went quite far with this, but the story is, has anyone heard of WebDriver at all, so it's a YouTube account that I think is still active and it just had these videos. So they're just red and blue squares in different correlation are kind of different combinations. And then sine waves as far as I can tell, again, it's a beeping sound, but it's pure tone. So sine waves are the most basic form of sound wave, there's no distortion in them at all. So it's a, you get this pure tone and WebDriver tool. So this YouTube channel was uploading, I think it had like 12,000 videos, and it was uploading dozens of these videos every day. And there was no description of what it was doing or why it was doing it. And it didn't seem to be controlled by person. There was only one video that wasn't like this. And it looked like this.

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And as the internet is want to do when it's kind of conspiracy mode, and people thought it might be some kind of spy communication, a bit like the numbers, stations on the radio, if anyone's ever heard of those Other people lose aliens. But then someone did some digging and realized that it was a one off or decided that they thought it was a YouTube testing algorithm. And Google who own YouTube never confirmed or denied this but one April Fool's Day they did this video.

39:28

I don't know if you know what that is. That's, that's a silhouette of Rick Astley dancing in the Yeah, that's it. It's a rick roll. So rick roll is in pretty old school internet prank in which you is called a bait and switch where you put a link up and you say, hey, Ron, look at the new iPhone. It looks amazing. And then people click on it. And instead of being taken to anything about an

iPhone, or whatever, some interesting thing that people might want to click on. They're taken to Rick Astley's video for never going to give you up which I guess the joke is, that is not not Right song. So Google, we're kind of referencing this or, you know, the WebDriver torso video reference this. So it became clear that there was no big conspiracy. And eventually now when you when you now get they still haven't actually officially confirmed that. It that that's what it's for. But it but it is a YouTube testing account and when you Google WebDriver torso, the Google logo turns into a little animated GIF of blue and red squares. The thing that I got used to at the start was Morse code. And if you want to find out what you said, or sang, then you can take a screenshot of that and I'm sure you can find on the internet. What I said, Okay, that's it. So that's my talk done. You just watch the second of three lectures given by me Matthew de Kersaint Giraudeau. As part of the seminars I'm hosting for language games, my artists commissioned for open school east. This seminar was about broadcasting and status. was given on the 18th of may 2020. The final seminar is about interruptions and the attention economy and takes place on Monday 15th of June 2020. Visit opa school east to take part in the final seminar and sign up for their mailing list.

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