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# CO-PRODUCTION ORACLE







# WHO / WHAT / WHY?!

- **Hannah Mumby** - I am an illustrator / artist, and I have been doing a residency this year with the Global Systems Institute (GSI) here at the uni.
- The focus my residency was to speak to the community and produce a toolkit that could help people understand co-production
- Today I'm sharing this tool: the Co-Production Oracle!
- First: context about the GSI and co-production
- Then: What the Co-Production Oracle is and how it was made
- Finally: Interactive activities to learn how to use the oracle cards - then at the end you can take a deck of cards away with you!

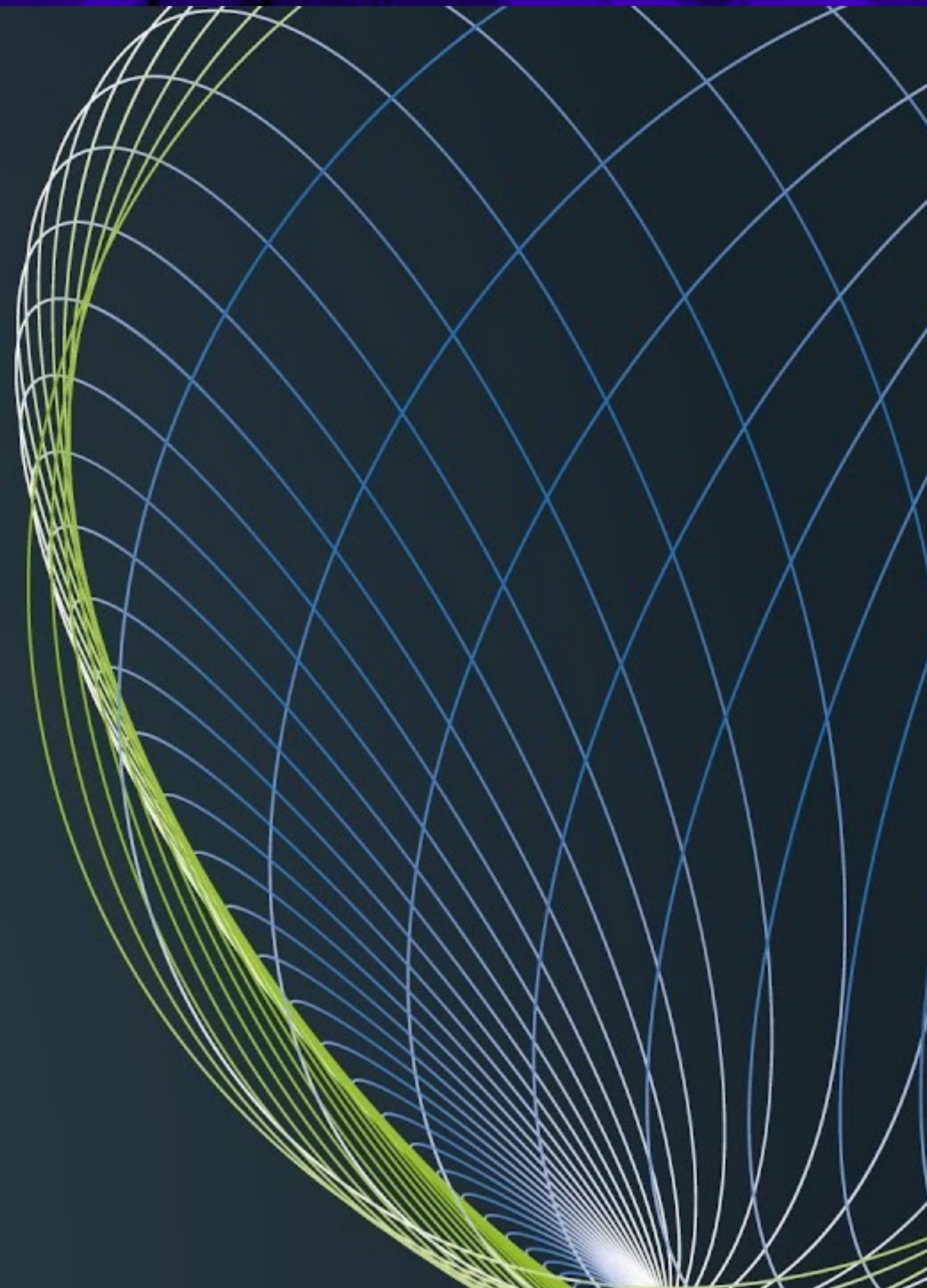




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# Creating Transformative Solutions



[www.exeter.ac.uk/research/gsi/](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/gsi/)



# Co-Production at GSI

“We will co-create a better future together”

GSI is built around an interconnected approach to research, education, and impact, with engagement at its centre. Our inaugural Retreat, involving academics from every campus and College, helped identify a suite of core values for the GSI that have shaped our academic strategy and are becoming embedded in our approach:

- **Co-production:** We will co-produce knowledge with partners (including citizens), through an inclusive, deliberative, and responsive process, developing new areas, debating, experimenting, and finding solutions.



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# Co-Production

**The term co-production refers to a way of working, whereby everybody works together on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision which works for them all.**

Co-production is a way of working where people come together in an equal partnership to create something new, or make changes to an existing situation.

*"Co-production is a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both partners have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities."*

GSI is built around an interconnected approach to research, education, and impact, with engagement at its centre. Our inaugural Retreat, involving academics from every campus and College, helped identify a suite of core values for the GSI that have shaped our academic strategy and are becoming embedded in our approach:

- **Co-production:** We will co-produce knowledge with partners (including citizens), through an inclusive, deliberative, and responsive process, developing new areas, debating, experimenting, and finding solutions.

The term Co-production refers to a way of working where service providers and users, work together to reach a collective outcome. The approach is value-driven and built on the principle that those who are affected by a service are best placed to help design it.



# Co-Production Core Principles

*(According to UCL Co-Production Collective)*

## **Being Human**

- ✧ Valuing diversity of knowledge, experience and perspective
- ✧ Building mutually beneficial relationships based on honesty and trust

## **Being Inclusive**

- ✧ Removing barriers to participation
- ✧ Recognising people's strengths and supporting their development

## **Being Transparent**

- ✧ Addressing power imbalances and hierarchies
- ✧ Sharing roles and responsibilities

## **Being Challenging**

- ✧ Continuous reflection, learning and improvement
- ✧ Embracing new ideas and ways of working



# **Dr Ernesto Schwartz-Marin**

**Lecturer in Sociology and Assistant Director of the  
Global Systems Institute, at the University of Exeter**



# The Brief

Looking for an illustrator / graphic artist to come in and **investigate the ways in which members of the GSI think about, and use, co-production**

The illustrator should have some **conversations** with members of the GSI about this - a **mutually beneficial exchange**, where both the illustrator and GSI members **gain new insights**

The end result should be a **toolkit** to help share best practice, and help members of the GSI do more co-production, and do it better, embedding it centrally within the GSI.



# Learning how people understand co-production at GSI

Interviewed 19 members of the GSI, asking 'what does co-production mean to you?'

✳ Some people very familiar and use it in their research

○ Some never heard of it before

Very hard to boil it down to a set of core principles

Difficult to translate this knowledge into a toolkit

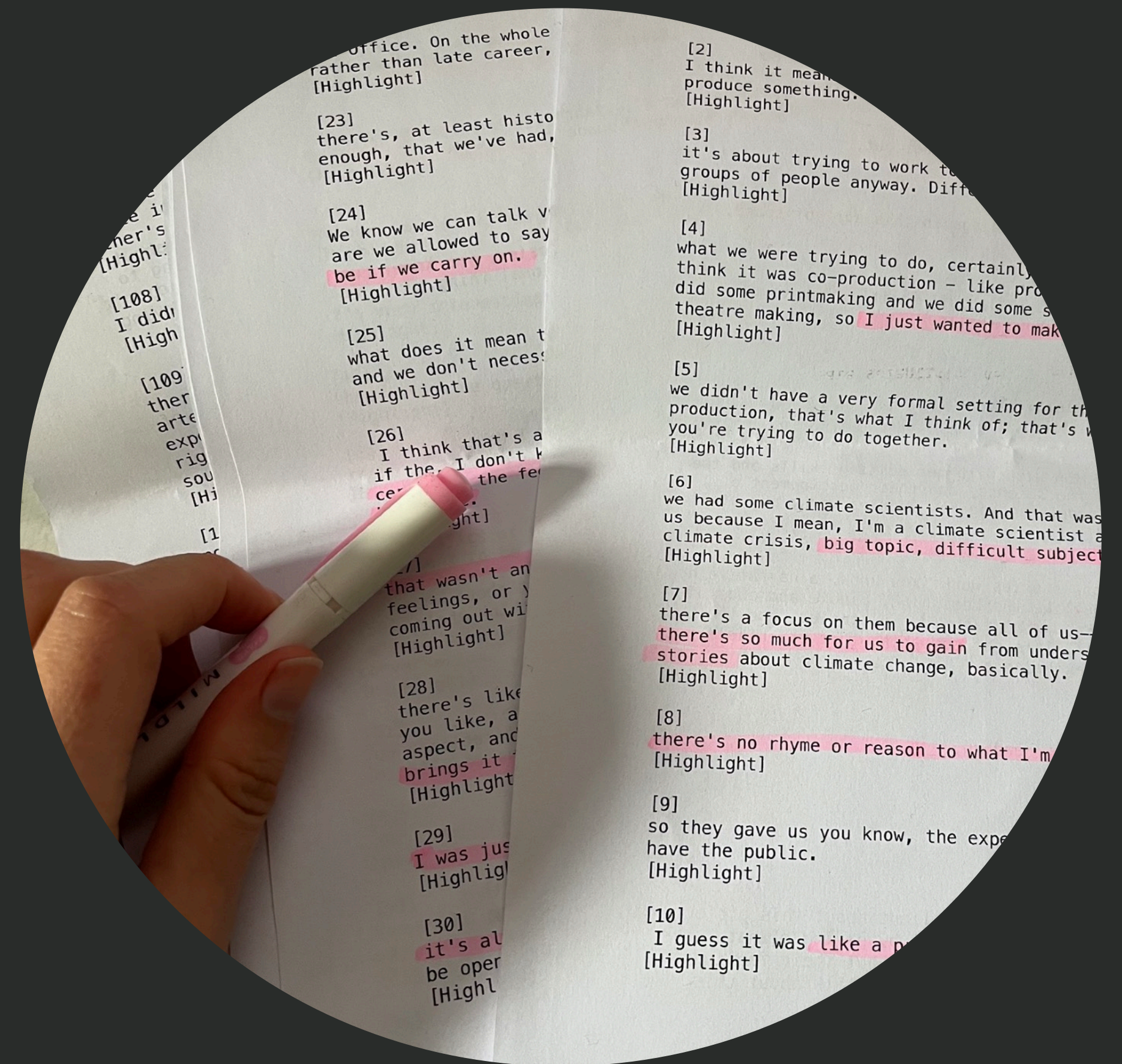
What emerges from the conversations is that it's a **messy** and **complex** process, that throws up a lot of challenging issues - there's an aspiration towards it, but in practice it can be very difficult to do





# Themes that emerged

- \* Hierarchy within research teams can dictate the direction of research
- \* In any community or collaboration, some approaches / disciplines valued more than others
- \* Feeling left out or on the periphery of a group - some voices louder than others
- \* Distribution of money can create tension around capacity
- \* Different cultural traditions create a clash in ways of working or communicating
- \* Researchers may already have an agenda before consulting a community
- \* "If only the public would understand the research, then everyone would change their behaviour for the better"
- \* "I have the best and most important solution to the problem, we should focus all our energy on this"





# A tool to explore this?

- \* Invitation to be curious about complexity
- \* Opening up difficult questions
- \* Becoming more tolerant of 'messiness'
- \* Creating space for more voices
- \* Building opportunities to be challenged by new points of view
- \* Resisting finding neat solutions
- \* Being more open to "not knowing"



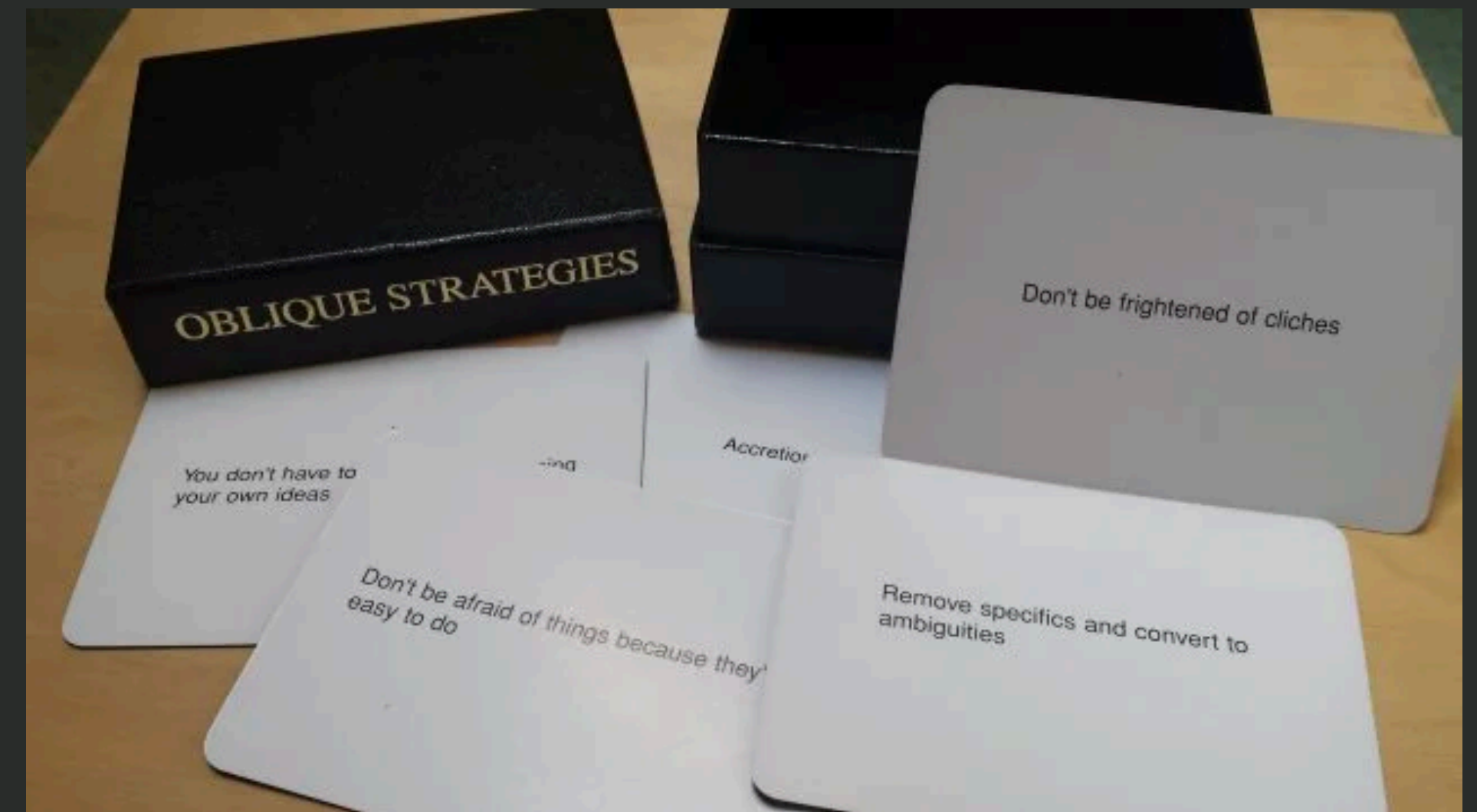


# Brian Eno: *Oblique Strategies*

"It's a device for breaking mental habits. Just go down that road you've never been before, and see what happens.

"[Creating the *Oblique Strategies* deck] came about because I noticed that in pressure situations ... you tend to fall back on the old solutions, because you don't want to take the risk of going down a road that doesn't pay off at all. And then you get stuck.

"[As artists] we practice imagining, we practice thinking about how other worlds could be, how other minds could be, how other people could be, how other lands could be ... it's one of the primary ways we understand the world"





# 'The Co-Production Oracle'

- A deck of 30 cards
- each card features a co-production 'archetype' illustration
- Each card links to a prompt in the booklet





# How we made the deck



Looked at the themes that emerged from the interviews, and added to these from our own experience of using and researching co-production



Translated the themes into 30 archetypes, which were ways of focusing on some of the issues and using symbolic, metaphorical images to bring them to life



For each archetype, we wrote a provocative prompt relating to that issue



Refined the text for the prompts so that they would be accessible to a broader audience (beyond an academic audience)





# How does it work?

- ➔ You **think of a question**, or issue that you would like a new perspective on (relating to co-production, collaboration, or working with others)
- ➔ You randomly **pick up to three cards**
- ➔ You read the **prompt** associated with the cards, and follow a trail of thought (see what they make you think of)
- ➔ The prompts can be **interpreted** various ways, and invite you to ask questions about the issue at hand (and the role you play) so that you can find a new perspective
- ➔ The aim is not to find a neat solution to a problem, but to **open up our understanding** of the issue, and become more aware of its complexity  
- **the prompts from the cards can be the beginning of a conversation or thought process**



# SOME OF THE CARDS

13



**THE GARDENER**

## THE GARDENER

You need to feed the soil for the plants to thrive. How can you cultivate this for the long term? What can be added? What can be nurtured to build strong roots?

16



**THE ENLIGHTENMENT**

## THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Is knowledge and learning only flowing in one direction? How might your expertise be flattening someone else's? Are you assuming that once someone agrees with you that things will change for the better?



# SOME OF THE CARDS

7



**THE SAVIOUR**

## THE SAVIOUR

Who are you rescuing?  
What makes you so  
civilised? Are you  
doing something  
because it will make  
you feel good and  
boost your  
reputation?

29



**THE TROUBLE**

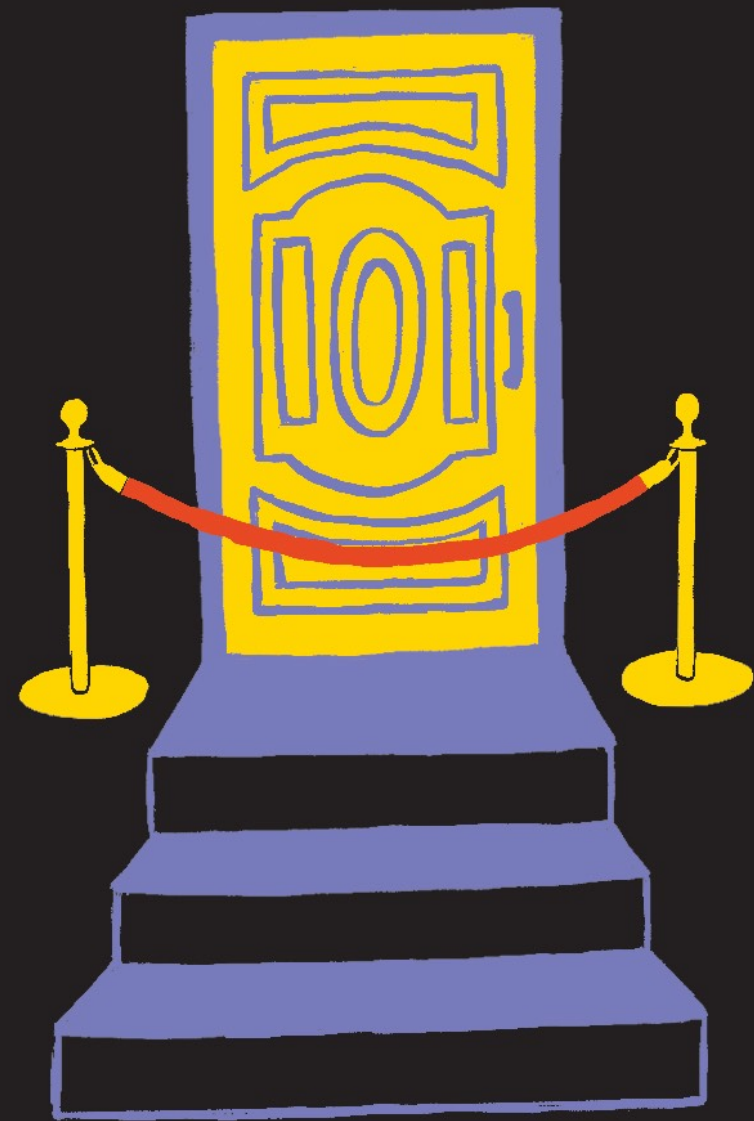
## THE TROUBLE

What cannot be said?  
What makes people  
feel uncomfortable?  
What is the risk of  
speaking out and  
confronting difficult  
subjects? And what is  
the risk of staying  
quiet?



# SOME OF THE CARDS

22



**THE PRIVATE PARTY**

## THE PRIVATE PARTY

Who would be unable to participate in this conversation? Who hasn't been invited to this party?

25



**THE PROMISE**

## THE PROMISE

What are people expecting from you, and what false hope might you be giving them? What promises are you making about what you're going to deliver?



## Themes addressed in the **Co-Production Oracle Card Deck**:

- ✧ Challenging the status quo
- ✧ Distribution of Resources
- ✧ Listening
- ✧ Serendipity
- ✧ Resistance
- ✧ Learning
- ✧ Adaptability
- ✧ Relationships and power dynamics
- ✧ Vulnerability
- ✧ Motivation
- ✧ Positionality
- ✧ Legacy
- ✧ Value



# How might the card deck be useful in real-life scenarios?

- Can be used in groups, pairs or by individuals
- Can be used in a flexible and open ended way
- Creates space for us to think and reflect without needing a resolution
- It's a technology to disrupt your ideas
- It can draw attention to things we might be doing / repeating without realising
- Helps us see our motivations more clearly
- Can reveal to us where we might be in positions of power
- Help us surface things that we might be avoiding thinking about
- Can be an icebreaker in complex scenarios
- Don't need internet!





The background of the entire image is a piece of marbled paper with a complex, organic pattern of swirling, wavy lines in various shades of brown, tan, and cream. The pattern resembles natural stone or liquid marbling.

How does it work?

**I DON'T KNOW YET!**

We will find out together



# Example of how I used the cards

QUESTION:

**“How can I feel less  
anxious about launching  
this card deck?”**



# "How can I feel less anxious about launching this card deck?"



## THE TROUBLE

What cannot be said?  
What makes people  
feel uncomfortable?  
What is the risk of  
speaking out and  
confronting difficult  
subjects? And what is  
the risk of staying  
quiet?



# "How can I feel less anxious about launching this card deck?"



## THE TROUBLE

What cannot be said?  
What makes people  
feel uncomfortable?  
What is the risk of  
speaking out and  
confronting difficult  
subjects? And what is  
the risk of staying  
quiet?

- I don't know if the card deck will work (this is 'what cannot be said')
- I feel like I need to come across as an expert and say "this is how it works, it's great at doing all these things, and I will show you exactly how to use it and get results"
- But I need to see if we can try this out as a group and figure it out together.
- There is a risk involved in saying "I don't know" - people might not take me seriously. But as an artist, it's okay (and a good thing) for me to say "I don't know"



"How can I feel less anxious about launching this card deck?"



### THE SAVIOUR

Who are you rescuing?  
What makes you so  
civilised? Are you  
doing something  
because it will make  
you feel good and  
boost your  
reputation?



# "How can I feel less anxious about launching this card deck?"



## THE SAVIOUR

Who are you rescuing?  
What makes you so  
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reputation?

- I am setting up a dynamic where I am going to help people find a better way of addressing problems
- I am going in with the intention to help people fix things and provide new knowledge to them, rather than letting each encounter be a conversation.
- I want to appear competent and knowledgeable, and build a reputation for myself as a skilled artist facilitator
- However this is overshadowing the possibility for co-created exchange



"How can I feel less anxious about launching this card deck?"



### THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Is knowledge and learning only flowing in one direction? How might your expertise be flattening someone else's? Are you assuming that once someone agrees with you that things will change for the better?



# "How can I feel less anxious about launching this card deck?"



## THE ENLIGHTENMENT

Is knowledge and learning only flowing in one direction? How might your expertise be flattening someone else's? Are you assuming that once someone agrees with you that things will change for the better?

- I have finished making this card deck and am worried that I don't have the capacity to take on anyone else's ideas about it at this stage
- I feel like I must give people really clear instructions on how it should be used, to ensure that it gets the 'desired results'. Basically I have to impose my rules and my knowledge on everyone else.
- I need to let go of it and release it into the world where people might make it their own, and come up with new ways for it to be used, and form their own ideas about it that will differ from what I had hoped or intended.



# ALL TOGETHER

We will explore the potential of this tool, together

It's here in front of us, but it's not had a life yet

I am not an expert in how it works, because it hasn't been used yet!

I want to hear how you respond to it

We can take it out into the world and use it in different ways

It can continue to be co-produced by all of us



# ACTIVITY:

## Let's test it out!



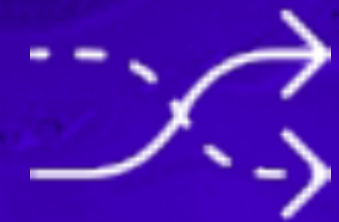
- \* **Learn the mechanics** of how the card deck can be used
- \* Explore some general questions for the cards in groups to **get a feel for how to interact with the cards**
- \* Work in triads: Bring a real life issue that you would like a new perspective on, and **see how consulting the card deck might open up your thought process**
- \* Help each other to learn **how to form questions**, how to prompt each other and practice **reflective listening**, and how to **interpret the prompts** offered by the cards
- \* **You will go away with your own card deck, and continue this learning out in the world!**



# Basic Steps:



**THINK** of the question or issue you want a new perspective on (ideally relating to co-production, collaboration, or working with others)



**SHUFFLE** the deck with the cards face-down



**DRAW** a card (or up to 3 cards) and read the prompts



**REFLECT** on what the cards' prompts make you think of



# Working with questions



Drop a question into the space and let it percolate



The card prompts are an invitation to follow a trail of thought



You're not trying to find a neat answer, but to extend a thinking process to find new perspectives



# TABLE GROUPS! CHOOSE A QUESTION

1

What barriers stop people outside the Uni from engaging with the work researchers are doing?

2

Climate scientists talk the talk but don't always walk the walk.  
Why is that?

3

Why isn't there more dialogue between different areas of research?

- **5 MINS:** Pull **first** card and reflect
- **5 MINS:** Pull **second** card and reflect
- **5 MINS:** Pull **third** card and reflect
- **STOP**



# SPLIT INTO TRIADS

## (Groups of 3)

There are 3 roles, and we will do 3 rounds, so everyone will be able to try each role. Each person will get a chance to bring a **question or issue from their own life that they would like a new perspective on.**



### QUESTIONER

Brings a question or issue to reflect on; responds to the prompts on the cards



### SHUFFLER

Shuffles the cards, allows the questioner to pick; reads the prompt, keeps them talking!



### OBSERVER

Watches and listens, feeds back to the others at the end about what they noticed



# FORM YOUR QUESTION!

5 MINS

The best approaches to forming questions for the Oracle deck are:

1. Questions about collaborations, working with others, or other forms of co-production or shared processes
2. Focusing on issues where you have some agency, or responsibility
3. Questions that ask how you can learn from a situation: e.g. exploring what you could pay closer attention to, or what you might be avoiding
4. Questions that allow you to understand an evolving process, rather than obtain a neat solution
5. **For this test run, choose a question you'd be happy speaking about with a stranger!**



# Reflective Listening



## SHUFFLER

If you're doing card readings in a pair or a group, practicing reflective listening is essential, especially if you are the Shuffler who is reading prompts and getting people to keep talking! The benefits of reflective listening are that it can:

- Increase the listener's understanding of the other person
- Help the other person clarify and express their thoughts

What does reflective listening involve? When practising reflective listening, you should:

- Keep your attention focused completely on the speaker
- Respond to them to help clarify what you've heard.
- As the listener, you do not offer your perspective or give advice, but instead carefully keep the focus on the other person's need or problem, and help them explore it.
- Listen more than you talk
- Ask the speaker to clarify what they have said, by telling you more about it
- Form a sense of the speaker's frame of reference while avoiding the temptation to respond from your own frame of reference.
- Repeat back and summarise the points of view expressed
- Keep an open mind, even if you disagree or have a strong opinion



# Reflective Listening



SHUFFLER

Examples of how to practice Reflective Listening in conversation:

- “Could you say a bit more about that?”
- “What does that make you think of?”
- Repeat a word or phrase back to the speaker, in a questioning tone, to ask them to clarify what they mean. E.g. “you feel **invisible**? What do you mean by that?”
- Summarise: listen accurately to the other person and reflect back to them the main points of what they have said (and ask them if you’ve understood correctly, and if not – maybe they can say more)
- Interested Silence: A period of active, attentive silence serves as a gentle nudge to the other person to move deeper into the conversation. It allows the other person time to think and reflect and then comfortably proceed at their own pace. The speaker may pause and you, the listener, can attend without having to say anything.





## QUESTIONER

Brings a question or issue to reflect on; responds to the prompts on the cards



## SHUFFLER

Shuffles the cards, allows the questioner to pick; reads the prompt, keeps them talking!



## OBSERVER

Watches and listens, feeds back to the others at the end about what they noticed



10 mins



1. Questioner says their question



2. Shuffler shuffles the deck; questioner pulls their first card; shuffler reads it



3. Questioner speaks and reflects and follows a trail of thought, shuffler keeps them talking (**reflective listening**)



4. Carry on until you've pulled up to 3 cards

2 mins



5. At the end the observer reflects on what they noticed



The background is a full-page image of marbled paper. It features a complex, organic pattern of swirling, wavy lines in various shades of brown, tan, and cream. The pattern resembles natural stone or liquid swirls. In the center of the image, the words "ROUND-UP" are printed in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is horizontally centered and stands out prominently against the darker, more intricate parts of the marbled background.

# ROUND-UP



# THANKS!



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