On the mountain is the Eternal City of Antiri, the place where there are no secrets and while the citizens do not smile so much, they hardly frown either. Jewels and objects of great worth lie in the streets for there is no theft, where there are no secrets and there are no secrets in Antiri long ago during the war of magical technology the city sheltered a great wizard, and in return for the city's kindness, the wizard enchanted the water of interior such that one need only stare into the reflection of a puddle or wash basin and ask after a personal place one should like to see and be shown that thing in its entirety. It's not spying, spying is an exclusive activity and since anyone can watch anyone this is simply how the Antirians live they have no word for secrecy. Life was turbulent at first the whispered slight to the bath house the swindles of the marketplace suddenly watchable for all, plus crime rings and crooked politicians could be listened in on at the moment's notice. Illicit love affairs observed by anyone sufficiently voyeuristic but the adjustment was made, recent generations have grown up with no concepts of concealment and do not seem to suffer for it, everything is visible in the water even the most mundane acts, the brushing of one's teeth, the brewing of one's tea is performed with attention and flare for anyone and everyone may be watching. There is nothing hidden, every eye is all seeing and all seen. But Antiri’s transparency is not for everyone, and for those who cannot bear such a way of life, far below by the ocean, swaddled always in fog is the Eternal City of Tinagrad, the place where there are only Secrets the citizens don't frown so much, but they hardly smile either. Possessions are many and doors are unlocked since there is no desire unfulfilled in Tinagrad and there are no thefts where there is no desire unfulfilled. For it was here long ago the great wizard first went for shelter and was refused, and to thank the people of Tinagrad for their apathy, he returned to the conclusion of the war and enchanted the water here too. The wet fog that permeates every street and house, the snow that thaws come spring. Though while the water in Tinagrad sees all citizens have no access to its omniscient visions, there is only one watcher, out of the bedrooms where glasses on nightstands listen of those mumbled Untold Secrets the Tinergradians admit in their sleep, down the cobbled stones where the puddles watch of land disputes and unrequited love, to the harbor where the ocean silently records of overpriced fish and out into the bay where there resides a great Kraken who watches. The Kraken never sleeps, never falters, his mind unjudging as a seismograph and the Kraken is very hungry, and its favorite meal is Secrets, as delivered by the water to its unblinking eyes, the secrets of Tinagrad. Each impulse and desire of each citizen such that they may be met if favorable to the market or suppressed if not, such that at the slightest hint of eccentricity citizens may be placed under heightened surveillance such that none need ever fear or want, and in return for this miracle of constant safety and satisfaction, all the Kraken requires is a little knowledge, and all it wants to know is everything, give me your tired thoughts, your poor decisions, your huddled missives, yearning to be free, who have you been going to bed with, who would you like to go to bed with, thinking of starting a family, thinking of cutting off your family, preferred brand of breakfast cereal, least favorite season, what does home mean to you. And if the miracle should falter for a second and a citizen-like catch sight of a great hungry eye peering from the water, and cry out these are secrets, my secrets, and my secrets are all I have, the Kraken only replies: You ungrateful little insect, for what pretty things I have sold you, what peace times I have delivered you, what love I have shown you

Privacy is an invention we made it up. For the first few hundred thousand years of our time, it is unlikely there were many loners, for hunter-gatherers going in alone probably meant death because, strength in numbers was about the only trick that kept us alive. We were social by necessity and we didn't have walls yet so other than the confines of your own mind how could you have privacy in that social configuration. What was the most game-changing human invention: fire, the transistor, all pretty rad, yes, but the wall is going to be up there in the top five at least. We've been doing walls for about 23 000 years now, the oldest one we've found being in Greece and not only do walls signify property, but it also means security, means castles, means established power structures, and it's only so long before walls start to mean privacy. And, still our ancestors understood privacy of the mind just fine. As in Secrets. The Chinese managed to keep the particulars of silk production a secret for over a thousand years. Then there was Greek Fire, a flammable slime used by the byzantines during battle, yeah that's right a 7th century flamethrower, and the secret of its composition was so well kept we still don't really know what it was today. Also the legend goes that when Genghis Khan dies his funeral escort kept his burial site a secret by murdering anyone they passed on the way there.

For the next ages, us Europeans at least did pretty much everything under the gaze of someone else while at home, eating, weeping and sleeping, it's how we built our houses. It wasn't until the 17th century that some genius thought to invent an entire room for the bed. But beds themselves were crazy expensive, most homes could only afford a single bed shared by family and guests which meant not only did you get to witness your nearest and dearest sleeping but all the other activities that might occur in a bedroom, and, while there wasn't really a concept of medieval privacy either, there were ways to obtain a little alone time, like angering the church and getting excommunicated. Or cutting off heads for a living. Working as an executioner was so shameful you wouldn't be invited into others homes, couldn't enter churches and had to live on the fringes of town. If privacy is the right to be let alone then, along with monks, executioners were arguably kind of the pioneers of something beginning to sound like modern privacy, but it would take a while yet.

While most technologists have been expecting a robotics Revolution for the last end of the century what we got instead was a Communications Revolution.

Not a few decades ago the hope for what the internet could do was limitless. Most societal issues surely stemmed from a lack of information and, with all human knowledge at our fingertips, we would all eventually come to the same objective conclusions, emerge from division and ignorance and draw together in peace as a unified digital family. And that didn’t really work out.

We were promised the end of History, we were promised ultimate truth, we're supposed to be solving world hunger and building Interstellar Starships. We've sacrificed truth in favor of mediated hyper reality.

When it comes to privacy, we’re not exactly doing the best right now. In a famous prison design, the panopticon, a guard Tower sits at the center so the guard can see all the inmates in a helpful 360 Panorama. The Twist is that the prisoners can't see into the tower and so never know when they're being watched so, they may as well assume they're always being watched. The constant implication of surveillance. We're now knee-deep in a technological Moment The Thinker Shashana Zubov calls: Surveillance capitalism, or rather, turning the internet into a data mill for no fun and lots of profit, and it has the potential not just to corrupt the future of the internet, but remove any possibility of digital privacy ever again. In the early 2000s the.com Bubble Burst this was a problem for Silicon Valley because no one quite knew how to monetize the internet yet, and that 17th personal yacht ain't just gonna buy itself. Google was clever, they noticed the courtesy of all the searches they were providing, they were that on a massive Buffet of data from and about their users lots of that data could be used to optimize Google itself, but a huge amount was left over and incidental which, we may as well call behavioral Surplus. At first, this was simple stuff like noticing if a user makes a lot of typos maybe that means they're in a hurry or if they're particularly diligent about apostrophes maybe they're all bookish or whatever but, Google realized they could use this leftover information to generate predictive patterns about a user's moods and desires and create absurdly well-targeted advertising. It worked, it made them rich beyond all imagining and the best part is, it's free, users gave them their secrets for free, in searches.

But, it's so much more Sinister than that, because as Google branched out intermedia and email and navigation, the data points for Behavioral Surplus, for its user Secrets, grew and grew. The inner lives of Google's users became its primary resource. A fully automated data mill extracting highly specific details of a user's psychology and turning that into big bucks via advertising, and, of course, the more data you collect about users, as in the more behavioral Surplus you extract, the more behavioral correlations you can find, and the more efficient the game gets. If I know that you're trying to sell a wedding ring and hire a divorce lawyer then I also know you're probably at that point in your life when a 95% vodka could sound appealing.

Just been for a run? Unrelatedly, check out these amazing shoes.

Other companies soon got in on behavioral Surplus too, because, if you throw Health trackers and digital thermostats and smart cars into the mix, all of them collecting buckets of personal data, it's possible to build an even more accurate model of your desires or, just sell that information to third parties. One's commute route and heart rate and sleep habits all helpfully recorded and transmitted by the one object that will probably stay no more than a foot away from our bodies for the rest of our lives data. Data one thought was one's own, data that are being sold on for staggering amounts of money, to the point that it is now an economy in itself. Brokers whose only job is to sell an entire profile of you, what you eat, what conditions you suffer from, voting habits, sexual orientation, your secrets. As Shashana Zuboff puts it, you take something from someone without their knowledge, claim you own it and then use it to become unprecedentedly wealthy, or you know, theft. But is it really theft if it doesn't impact us on a day-to-day level? Yes.

There's a fun adage that if the product is free then you're the product but, here, it's more like you're the raw material and there's no such thing as too much data to those who want it. Marital status, level of Education, feelings regarding a recent game update, all of it is being fed into the system decoding the black box of human desire itself which is being cross-referenced against ever more honed personality models, not just to advertise but, to scare and seduce in advance, to make that advertising even more effective. This is the panopticon, constantly implied surveillance, and even better surveillance is now being framed as just how things are on the internet, just another mosquito on the digital beach. This is already turning into an informational hostage situation. Digital thermostats that will stop updating their software if you refuse to give the parent company your usage data. Apps that conveniently forget to mention, by using them in the first place, you've tacitly agreed to pass on your blood sugar level or details of a menstrual cycle.

Behavioral Surplus is the harvesting and commodification of our digital likenesses, our data, our secrets for profit and if one's response is: Well, if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear. Okay, sounds great but, upon uttering that I hope you'll allow your bathroom door to be removed and to have live streaming thermal cameras installed in which have a room of the house you undertake the majority of your private time, because nothing to hide, nothing to fear, right? Privacy isn't about having somewhere to do drug deals, it's a basic tenet of modern human living. It is the right to be let alone and we've only just codified it and, we may already be about to lose it. If companies can infer that we’re pregnant or introverted or just going through one of the many thousands of life crises humans enjoy during their time. Well simultaneously we know basically nothing about how these companies are collecting and using our data that that is an asymmetry a data extraction panopticon with the sole purpose of commodifying our psychology, of commodifying our secrets. Now one obvious solution to this, is the restating of one's data as one's personal property, the problem with that is that, personal property can be sold, can become a commodity and your privacy and your data are no more a commodity than your right to free association or oxygen. Plus behavioral Surplus isn't just about an individual's data, it's about the data of groups and demographics and things that can't be personally owned but, are terribly useful as data points but, whatever the solution, if we want to steer history away from this waterfall, it's going to take lots of getting angry and if we don't do something about this, constantly harvesting more and more behavioral Surplus to keep the great data Mill going will just be what the internet is, because that's how the next Generations will grow up with it, because the model is already a massive part of the digital economy, later it will be the predominant model, and later will be too late we get to decide now, whether this was just a historical blip or the shape of things to come, effectively killing privacy forever.

The Big Brother of surveillance has a little brother called a sousveillance. Rather than being surveilled from the top-down citizens watch from the bottom up, dashboard cameras for example, rebalancing the symmetry of Secrets by watching the watches and, maybe the best fictional extreme of this ever written is a Sci-Fi novel called the lights of other days. Sometime in the nearest future a company cracks wormholes, only the wormholes are too small to send anything through, too small to see even, but you can peek inside. So, you can open a wormhole anywhere on the planet and spy on anyone on the planet without them knowing and of course one of the main uses immediately becomes surveilling those more powerful watching, the back rooms of governments and corporations which makes corruption very difficult then, things get rather strange when some genius realizes if you put a time delay on the thing, you can see back into the past, anytime anywhere, you can't influence the past, but you can watch anything that ever happened, things do not go well mass outcry, suicides, every terrible thing you've ever said is now immediately available to people. The next generations to grow up are a bit more relaxed about it all, because the wormhole technology is everywhere, they dress functionally and for fashion rather than modesty because why cover anything everyone has seen already. They have no concept of personal privacy but, as a consolation they also have no concept of being surveilled by powerful eyes unseen because the Watchers can always be watched. They've replaced the panopticon with many panopticons, 8 billion of them. Everyone is a watcher. Ultimately the wormholes become a very strange way of rebalancing the asymmetry of secrets by abolishing all secrets and it isn't that much of a stretch to imagine we might face a similar conundrum sometime soon, the smallest camera ever made weighs a gram and is about the size of a grain of sand. The resolution is in Grace 200 by 200 pixels but that's enough to do some decent spying and it's not like the resolution won't get better and, it's not like this won't soon extend to drones, perhaps the size of nuts with full audio and video capture and it's not like they won't be mass manufactured and purchasable, combine that with ever increasing data storage, combine that with whatever brain machine interfaces the next generations will be messing around with. It's not hard to imagine we might build a different kind of panopticon, one in which it's taken for granted that you're probably being watched, that everything you've ever said and done has been recorded and can be accessed by anyone, at any time and that you can do the same, at any time, to everyone you know. A participatory panopticon. Now that sounds horrible, obviously there will be no escape from every stupid slip of the tongue 20 years ago, potentially from every invasive thought but, the benefit of course is, that unless the powerful had invisibility cloaks or lived in faraday cages, they would have to play the game too. No one would be exempt from the participatory panopticon, it's a very strange kind of fair but a lot more fair than the current Mill of asymmetrical secrets we live in at the moment. When it comes to panopticons none is better than one but, one is a lot worse than 8 billion, if technology is going to break privacy anyway, maybe better that it'd be on our own terms.

It'll be up to us whether Enchanted water flows unobstructed through the city. Listening to us, yes, but impartially, and replying, when asked, to convey not only visions of other possible cities and other possible worlds but, showing ourselves to ourselves. Whether that water runs unobstructed through the streets bringing information, whether that water flows down to the Estuary and sustains those towering assiduous trees of knowledge we grow over our heads. One great Forest Network across the revolution World, talking in all languages of all things, for all time, such that if Interstellar visitors arrived a hundred years from now, and looked down upon the world and the enchanted water and the forest we have built. Or whether instead the water is damned and the Estuary drained and wet fog is all That Remains of it fog that Waits in every spot of the house and mind one might once have attempted to go and be alone in, whether that fog is Engineered to no longer speak to us, of distant places or possible Futures, but only forever listens with a single omnipresent ear to our most private hopes and phobias, whether the operation becomes so efficient that of a dim evening one can step outside into the gray Twilight and look out to the roads which one knows beneath stream all of one's secrets. To look skyward and know one's secrets are being dispatched to ingenious silver Birds overhead whereupon their blown-like pollen across the entire globe and finally received and consolidated into perfectly ordered datasets in far-flung and enormous Halls where there resides a great Kraken. A kraken who does not sleep, who does not tire and is never full. A kraken who listens of all the dreams and secrets of all those who live in the fog and lovingly utilizes those dreams and secrets for the production ever more opulent Trinkets. A kraken so saturated in secrets that it considers the currents of the human heart and mind no less manipulable than the diverting of a stream or tilling of a field. A kraken that knows full well if Enchanted water only listens then that isn't an enchantment that's a curse.

Total confiscation of privacy via corporate surveillance the usurping of human psychology via Opera and conditioning the great end of History purchased and delivered at the soonest convenience whatever you want whatever you didn't even know you wanted the only price being standing epistemically naked before digital Gods Who Remain forever shrouded and the most diabolical part of the door that we built the cage for ourselves not even from some Orwellian will to control not even from some stupid fear of the other or Terror in face of our own Natures but simply to make money

On the mountain lies Antiri, a city where no secrets exist. Jewels and valuable objects adorn the streets without fear of theft. Long ago the city’s water was blessed. By gazing into a reflection, one could see any desired location. Life initially faced turbulence, with bathhouse whispers and marketplace swindles exposed. However, subsequent generations grew up without the concept of concealment. Everything, even the most mundane acts, became visible. Antiri had no word for secrecy.

For those who couldn't bear such transparency, Tinagrad emerged below, shrouded in perpetual fog. This Eternal City of Secrets lacked smiles but also lacked frowns. Possessions abounded, and doors remained unlocked. The water was enchanted as well. However, the wet fog and the bay's Kraken became the sole observer. Tinagrad's citizens had no access to the visions, except for the Kraken. They lived under heightened surveillance, sacrificing privacy for safety and satisfaction.

Privacy is an invention, unnecessary in the ancient social configuration without walls. The wall's invention marked a significant milestone, symbolizing property, security, and eventually privacy. Our ancestors understood the privacy of the mind through secrets, such as the Chinese keeping the details of silk production hidden for centuries. Privacy evolved slowly, with individuals seeking moments of solitude or living on society's fringes.

Instead of a robotic revolution, we experienced a communications revolution. The internet was expected to unite humanity in peace through shared knowledge, but it didn't deliver as promised. We sacrificed truth for a mediated hyper-reality. Privacy became a challenge in the age of surveillance capitalism, where the internet became a data mill for profit. Companies like Google collected user data to optimize their services and generate targeted advertising. Other companies joined in, harvesting personal data from various devices, creating an economy of data brokers. Our data, our secrets, were being commodified without our knowledge.

Behavioral surplus, the extraction and commodification of our digital lives, grew increasingly sinister. Companies used our data to build highly accurate models of our desires, making advertising more effective. Privacy eroded, and the constant implication of surveillance became the norm. We face an informational hostage situation, where our data is used against us without our understanding or consent.

We must recognize privacy as a basic tenet of modern human living, a right to be left alone. Our data should not be treated as personal property that can be bought and sold. Privacy extends beyond individuals to include groups and demographics. We must take action against this data extraction panopticon before privacy is lost forever.

In the famous prison design, the panopticon, there is a central guard tower providing a complete view of inmates, who remain unaware of when they're being watched. This constant implication of surveillance we have experience in the modern world should be replaced by sousveillance, which involves individuals or groups using surveillance techniques to monitor those in power. Unlike one-way surveillance, sousveillance empowers individuals, promotes transparency, accountability, and shifts power dynamics. It allows individuals to actively participate in monitoring, challenging the control of information and ensuring accountability for those in authority. This is represented by the city of Antiri.

In summary, Antiri is a transparent city where secrets are nonexistent, while Tinagrad embraces secrecy and surveillance. Privacy is a human invention that emerged with the advent of walls. The internet and data collection have eroded privacy, leading to surveillance capitalism. We must recognize the importance of privacy and take action to protect it. Sousveillance offers a different perspective on observation. The novel "The Lights of Other Days" explores the implications of extreme transparency.

Na hore leží Antira, mesto, kde neexistujú žiadne tajomstvá. Šperky a cenné predmety zdobia ulice bez strachu z krádeže. Kedysi dávno bola voda v meste požehnaná. Pohľadom do odrazu bolo možné vidieť akékoľvek želané miesto. Mestu spočiatku čelilo konfliktu, keď sa šepkalo o kúpeľoch a odhaľovali sa podvody na trhovisku. Ďalšie generácie však vyrastali bez utajenia. Všetko sa stalo viditeľným. Antirančania nepotrebovali slovo pre utajenie.

Pre tých, ktorí takúto priehľadnosť nezniesli, bolo dole mesto Tinigrad, zahalené do večnej hmly. Majetkov tu bolo veľa a dvere zostávali odomknuté. Aj tu bola voda bola začarovaná. Pozorovateľ však bol len jeden. Obyvatelia Tinigradu nemali prístup k vidinám. Žili pod zvýšeným dohľadom, obetovali súkromie v prospech ich bezpečnosti a spokojnosti.

Komodifikácia našich digitálnych životov sa stáva čoraz hrozivejšou. Spoločnosti využívajú naše údaje len aby zarobili. Súkromie zaniká a neustály predpoklad sledovania sa stáva bežným. Čelíme situácii ako informační rukojemníci, keď sa naše údaje používajú proti nám bez nášho pochopenia alebo súhlasu.

V slávnom návrhu väznice, panoptikonu, je centrálna strážna veža poskytujúca úplný prehľad o väzňoch, ktorí do nej nevidia a tak si neuvedomujú, kedy sú sledovaní. Tento neustály náznak sledovania, ktorý zažívame aj my v modernom svete, by mal byť nahradený, zameniť jednu strážnu vežu za 8 miliárd. Umožnilo by nám to aktívne sa zúčastňovať na monitorovaní, spochybňovať kontrolu informácií a zabezpečovať zodpovednosť tých, ktorí majú moc. Takúto situáciu predstavuje mesto Antira.

Musíme uznať súkromie ako základné právo moderného ľudského života. S našimi údajmi by sa nemalo zaobchádzať ako s osobným majetkom, ktorý sa dá kúpiť a predať. Musíme podniknúť kroky proti tomuto centrálnemu panoptiku získavania údajov skôr, ako súkromie navždy stratíme.