

CONVERSATION ABOUT THE NATURE OF SELF AND OTHER. C-SITE3 / DAINPRINT 2021.

About other.

In a dual perspective the self is defined as a bodymind and the world with its persons & objects is perceived as the other.

the knower and the known; the subject and the object.

Self and all others are interconnected in space and time; even more their relation IS spacetime.

But I would like to introduce a non-dual interpretation in the discussion about other.

How we know ourselves is how we define other. They are complementary.

When Descartes said 'I am thinking and therefore I am' the self was perceived as the one who is doing the thinking.

But are we the one who is doing the thinking or are we the being who is knowing our thoughts? I claim the second; 'I am and therefore I am'. Thoughts (and feelings) can be known as discontinuous linear structures in one's mind. They are objectifiable, they are bordered by spacetime and they can be perceived similar to persons & objects; the others around us.

The true self, the one who knows the thoughts, is the only one who can not be objectified. It is not a thought in itself; it is a dimensionless but space-like quality in which thoughts, feelings and all other objectifiable perceptions happen and in which they are known. I say space-like because similar to space this knowing self is colorless and is not stained by the content of what happens in it.

We can call that awareness; the Self or consciousness. It is the only continuous, but constantly overlooked, experience which is not bound by spacetime. It is ever present, here and now.

Now... what is interesting is that different persons or others do not have a similar, but the SAME consciousness. Persons do not have A consciousness; consciousness has persons (person is derived from the Latin 'persona' the masked character who plays its role on the stage).

You can experience this when you recognize your shared self in the other. *When perceiving objects we call this recognition beauty, with feelings for persons we call this recognition love. (Rupert Spira)*

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Kadowaki Kozo: we could say that people and things are other to one another, and architecture provides a framework for people and things to work together. What potential is there in considering objects as both partners and the other for architects?

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answer Olivier at Kadowaki Kozo:

Indeed; architecture provides a framework for others to relate to one another. Architecture embraces space and therefore connects all others within. But I do not feel the need to categorize architecture as other than other. It is merely a bigger other containing smaller others.

In my practice I focus on what I call spatial interventions. Those are mostly self-built structures which relate directly to the given context and by which I try to redefine space. Making not the built environment, but space itself the object of interest. I aim to give space its full potential by creating open environments for future use; new stages for future happenings. I literally try to put space under tension by focusing on increasing the awareness of the visitor; enhancing the presence of the observer and thus collapsing the attention back into its source, back into the here & now.

Furthermore, I claim that sentiency (*) is a very specific spatial quality and the increase of (meta-)awareness in sentient beings is the aim of being/consciousness itself.

In this thought scheme the treatment of space is of major significance and the (art)world functions as the playful place of spatial experiment.

All good things serve space; true creative action has in its core a spatial temporal complement. In architecture, the walls are at the service of the space in between those walls. In drawings, lines are related to one another by the surface between those lines. Similar is the stillness between sounds essential for the understanding of spoken language and our appreciation of music.

Therefore, a creative action can be understood as a causal expression of spatial empathy; this is because the act of creating itself is rooted in a space-like emptiness. True creative action is never an expression of one's personal thoughts; it flows from the impersonal depth through the space in between those thoughts. Like breathing, creative action happens.

(*)By sentiency I mean the condition of self organizing organisms/agents which have a sensory faculty in their waking state; they have some kind of ability to experience the environment. Sentiency is embedded in an onion-like, multidimensional structure. It should be understood as a multilayered wide range of conscious/receptive agents stacked on top of each other. Agents such as a cell, a plant, an animal, a flock of birds, a team of soccer players, the left hemisphere of a brain, a brain, a person, a household, an ecosystem, a planet, a star, a solar system, a galaxy, a cluster of galaxies and the visible universe.

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Question Olivier at Ryuji Nakamura.

Indeed, we know the self in comparison to the other. Other as in the not-self. But can there be other means of knowing the self? If you are NOT all others, that is, NOT the whole of all your objectifiable experience, then who are you? Is to know the self the persistent not-knowing of who you are?

On the other hand, all you truly know is the knowing of your own experience. If you understand the self as consciousness, are not all apparent others part of you?

When understanding one's self (e.g. in the face of nature or in an intimate moment of love) the shared reality reveals itself. The comparison of self with other briefly stops, the knower is the known, self is other. But the shared reality is always there; so then who are you? ;)

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question of Ryuji Nakamura:

A very interesting question but one that is difficult to answer. If we consider even the self to be one and the same as other, then what remains within us can be completely objectified. Perhaps we could observe this by looking at brain cells, prior to synaptic connection? If not, is there anything else which exists between the self which becomes other, and brain cells prior to synaptic connection? Or does "self" incorporate both "the self that becomes other" and "the self that cannot become other"?

The answers to these questions remain unclear to me.

Olivier, am I right to assume these are questions you have thought about before? I apologize for asking questions rather than giving answers.

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answer Olivier to Ryuji Nakamura:

Ryuji Nakamura: "The answers to these questions remain unclear to me."

We touch a hard problem which can not be solved by use of current language; because language divides and makes only partial reference to reality. It is dual by its very nature. But language can be used to question cultural approved & fixed beliefs by pointing to truth, thus creating openness where reality can be experienced. This is the aim here and it is the aim of art(*); to give you a funny feeling.

(*) Pablo Picasso stated in a letter of 1923 to Marius de Zayas, "We all know that Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth."

Ryuji Nakamura: "What remains within us can be completely objectified."

The personal body is only known as an objectified experience; it is perceived as a blend of bodily sensations, thoughts, feelings and memories. Likewise, what is commonly named matter, is also to be understood as an experience within consciousness and not visa versa.

Matter is an objectified phenomenon; but nothing is known about it which is independent from our perception of it.

We EXPERIENCE hearing the sound of an engine, we EXPERIENCE feeling the texture of wood, we EXPERIENCE looking at cells under the microscope,... but the emphasis on the experience is predominantly overlooked.

It is a bold claim but matter manifests ONLY IN our experience, its independent existence is merely a cultural approved assumption and a persistent belief.

The reason why we can easily relate with one another about the sameness in perceiving the properties of matter (known as the intersubjective agreement), is not because matter is autonomous & exists independent 'out there'. But because we share a similar experience as localized and deeply related sentient agents which are grounded in one consciousness.

I should re-emphasize that consciousness is a dimensionless empty & space-like quality. Consciousness is NOT the person, the body or the brain which perceives; consciousness is THE REALITY which perceives.

The person/body/brain, similar to the world and the whole of matter, should be understood as its manifestation. They are the phenomenal localizations of a spacetime interface, the temporarily inner boundaries of space. Like fleeting waves on a vast ocean, the person/body/brain, the world, all matter and even the fabric of spacetime itself, are emerging modulations of consciousness.

Reality is not 2, it is non-dual by nature. The reality which perceives is what I am, it is the same reality which you are and the reality of what all other is.

If you allow yourself to be open to the claim of one shared and the same reality, that is; allow yourself to know that you do not know that this claim is not true, you are in the natural state of grace. This state of agnostic not-knowing is prior to all serendipity and prior to true creative action. It is by itself freedom; freedom from personal beliefs and freedom from culture. :)