

## SELF

by NonistJohn Schaeffer

With whom do you speak when you talk to yourself? A spirit? An angel?  
Some wry little elf? A watcher? A pilot? Some brain-dwelling troll? A  
zeitgeist? A psyche? Someone in control?

A tiny dictator who rules from inside? Some psychic hitch-hiker along  
for the ride? An organ or tissue which somehow can care? Some home-grown  
homunculus? Or one from "out there"?

Then wouldn't that mean that your self wasn't you, and some "other" is driving? Now  
who's foolin' who? There's no one inside us. No "other" at least. We're all self-  
contained in the brain of our beast.

And beasties we are (...and some beastier than most!). We're made out of matter, and  
not out of ghost. But somehow our concepts of self all diverge. It's 'cause our  
descriptions are all made of.... words.

Though words are mere labels, abstractions, and useful. With abstruse  
abuse they're profusely obtuseful!

To end this offense and to fend off this tendency, I recommend that one end one's  
dependency.

Thinking in labels, omitting the functions, we all run the risk of our hidden assumptions.  
The logic's illusive, but try this for size; A word may not mean what it's "meaning"  
implies.

A noun, for example, is sort of a short-cut. One thinks it's the thing it purports to purport,  
but, that's all in our heads. For it's we who've supplied all the means for its meaning from  
deep down inside.

All by itself that ol' noun don't mean beans! It's what we bring to it  
that means what it means. From all we've been told, or believed, or inferred, we build up  
our notions surrounding a word.

And "self" is a word that for years we've all used. But what does it label? Machine, or its  
muse? Can one call self "other" and still call one "me"? Then, might one be plural?

A council?

A 'we'?

If SELF may be many selves -- who's in control? And self-abdication frees one from the  
role, of self-as-the-chief of one's own inner tribe.

T'wit, "selves" may thus function to better describe.

I've talked with my selves. Oh, c'mon! So have you. We all have. It's something that all humans do. While pondering quandaries our inner voices insist on assisting in all of our choices.

Our own inner council we just can't shut up. They're always on-line, and they do interrupt. There's only one way to put up with this mess. To beat 'em, I join 'em -- alas, I confess.

Whoever I am, then, whatever my role, results from a constant, cacophonous poll, of facts and emotions all bangin' about. And whoever I 'am' is.....  
whatever comes out!

It's none of my faults, then, just which one is I. I never know who's going to speak next, nor why. I cuss 'n discuss ad reducto absurd, 'til finally just one 'me' gets in the last word.

I wait on myselfs to see which me will show. But one thing I'm sure of, there's one thing I know; it's not someone else who I am here inside. It's me!  
But which me, I can rarely decide.

There's one me that's peaceful. One loves a good spat. One me's always hungry. One knows I'm too fat. There's one that cries, "Onward!" Another that stalls. There's one that's a coward. And one that's got balls.

One thinks with his dick. Still another his brain. And one lacks the sense to come in from the rain. While one is a genius, another's a fool. And one is so nerdy. And one's way too cool.

One me values intellect far and above. Yet one covets passion, and suffers for love. The flower child me is a pacifist still. Another knows well that, if cornered, I'd kill.

Sometimes I'm beside myselfs, fraught with concern over how to abide myselfs, each in its turn. Though making my mind up's a heady endeavor, I manage to pull my 'self', somehow, together..

"It all sounds so schitzy," I hear someone say, "...to pick us apart and describe us this way. We know who we are. And we know that we know!"  
But... how do you know, that you know that you know?

And wherefore this power to reason so keen? Just where lives this knowledge to know what we mean? "This body." you say? What, this meat under skin?  
You're half right.  
Now ponder the patterns within.

Like patterns of blood flow, and patterns of air flow, and lots more we can't see.. We know that they're there though. Like patterns of factoids, and those of emotions. From patterning patterns derive all our notions.

Our patterns of brainwaves describe states of mind, evolving through feedback with gathering time. They feed off each other and then reappear, as superposed waveforms, which then decohere.

Our viewpoints are patterns that loop through the brain. They're all that we are. All the joy. All the pain. All memories, summaries, judgements as well, are just billions of neurons all goin' to beat hell.

Each neuron connects up with hundreds or more. Their looping re-entries forge patterns galore. And inside each neuron are bigger surprises. A quantum conundrum materializes!

Each neuron's a brain of its own, it would seem, of water filled tubules, with proteins between. The shape of each H<sub>2</sub>O's charge and position, results from each tubulin's 'lectric condition.

Connecting these tubes there are proteins which modulate feedback that's like a Bose-Einstein Condensate -- a non-local function of quantum harmonics, with resonance patterns one could call "phononics".

Discrete bio-energy fields ebb and flow. These fields within fields are how neurons all know, which sets of synapses should fire, and how strong; which ones to inhibit, how much, and how long.

In concert these patterns consort with themselves. It gets more apparent, the deeper one delves, that self as-a-concept is so ill-defined. But choose the right words, and it can be refined.

To see self as function might serve to suffice. And 'function' could be a defining device, to keep all our mental conceptual mappings, more closely aligned to Reality's hap'nings.

Then self is a does, not an is, one could say. And "function"'s preserved in the language that way. Thus thinking of self more in terms of a-flowing, may better describe this emergence of 'knowing'.

This flow, like the spectrum electromagnetic, can range from near zero to high-energetic. Thus, levels of consciousness seamlessly surge, from quantum beginnings as patterns converge.

The lines that we draw between conscious, and sub-, cut through the connectedness. Aye, there's the rub! So what we call self is misnomer, at best. The label falls short in a

functional test.

The question of self is semantically bent, from not seeing self as a 'space-time' event. In space, self is multiple, strewn through the mind. It only seems single when focused in time.

As time can't exist independent of space, nor can space escape time's most ardent embrace, to split space-time's function in parts that aren't there, leaves logic agog in semantic despair.

We often give labels to things which are not. Then use them to reason, and figure, and plot. Such reasoning can't help but lead us astray, and delusion soon follows. Life's funny that way.

*\*note\** [ On speaking of labeling things, please refer to my "ISes Don't And Nouns Are Not" for its purview. ]

So self isn't singular, nor is it plural.  
Nor limited, thus, to the mater-subdural. Nor does self exist independent of time.  
It's constantly fluxing, thus hard to define.

I know what you're thinking, "Then, where is the "soul"? And wherefore this need to make goodness our goal? And what about miracles, God, and the rest? Don't we humans need 'em to live at our best?"

"We can't be mere patterns," I hear someone snicker, "...all neurons' and ions' electrical flicker. We've got to be more, or we'd lose self respect. And civilization would surely be wrecked!"

"We must have a Reason to do what we must. How else can we know what we're doing is just? Without souls we're just existentialist stew.... and anything goes. I'm afraid that won't do!"

Concerning the reason for things as they 'are', our language can only support us so far. Then, try as we might, we end up in distress. Debate obtains only infinite regress.

Our knowledge thus far has an event horizon, beyond which there's nothing to lay our minds' eyes on. Reality runs off the edge of our maps. Between what we know, and "what-am" there are gaps!

We know lots of stuff about how some things work. The 'why' is the thing that drives most folks berserk. They can't see that "Why?"'s the wrong question to ask -- and answering, thus, an impossible task.

They grasp at their straws, and they jump their conclusions, 'cause something inside

demands final solutions. They're driven by need for some Ultimate Truth. Like Boomers obsessing some fountain of youth.

They'd rather believe in THE ultimate plan, than think evolution's the reason for man. They pray for a sky-hook to show them the way. To those who demand one to live, I could say...

You want one? Invent one!

Why bother with fact? You don't even have to leave logic intact. Pick any religion. Or just make up one. Don't let being rational spoil your fun.

Don't bother with evidence! You now what's what. Just close your eyes, and it's there in your gut. You want it? You got it. As simple as that... No Masters. No Bachelors. No taking the SAT.

There's no need to learn what you don't understand. Reject all that science which strays out of hand. You know what you need, and you know what you feel. To hell with the heathen who say that ain't real!

They're just out to get you as likely as not. They're Godless elitists. And evil, the lot! Their facts and their figures don't mean what they say. It's all just a smokescreen to keep you at bay!

They're after your soul. Don't you pay no attention, to progress, discovery, change, or invention. They're killers of faith, and they're spreaders of doubt. Why not kill 'em all, and let God sort 'em out?

Sheesh! Taking this track to its logical end, there's no telling the depths we might likely descend. Our history's replete with disastrous results, where reason conflicts with unreasoning cults.

But these too are part of the patterns of learning. And wonder. And striving. And conflict. And yearning. It hasn't been pretty, as history points out. But I've every faith evolution will out.

We got here that way, and it's worked well so far. Without it we wouldn't be who-all we are! It's simple pragmatics. Seen in retrospect -- we're lucky we made it this far. What the heck!

The spectrum of consciousness, like that of light, extends both directions, and clean out of sight. Our knowledge will grow more as our tools evolve. But self, as-a-question, can never be solved.

Is one not the master of one's so-called fate? Does having a choice or free will ever rate? Or are we pre-programmed matrixed radiation, determined from physics that subtend

creation?

There'll always be places our theories won't touch. The edges of knowledge are bounded by such. Between what we know and the way things may "be", there'll always be room for a sweet mystery.

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