Reflective Studies

A broadcast by Surfatial, the collective of Satya Gummuluri, Malavika Rajnarayan and me, 4 July 2016. Watch on YouTube

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Prayas Abhinav · prayasabhinav.net/videos

00:02 MALAVIKA (?) Yeah.

00:03 MALAVIKA (?) So we'll begin this study group of reflective studies. this is in preparation for some research we're doing for an essay we're writing currently and the material and inputs we're getting from the study group and the follow up we'll be having after the study group with all the participants will be used in the essay we'll be writing.

00:28 And

00:28 We'll be sharing the details of it once the study group is over and how we'll go about getting more feedback from you. And we'll be giving credits for every individual who gives us inputs during the feedback session also. so we'll get down to the questions for today. The first question is

00:57 Is self re ref self reflection possible? If yes, what are the methods you use to self reflect?

01:13 ADITYA (?) Okay.

01:15 MALAVIKA (?) So

01:17 The question is whether

01:21 Self ref self reflection is possible at all.

01:26 And w what does one mean by self reflection? What is it that what does that process entail?

01:40 ADITYA So self reflection in terms of a persona or in terms of one's w work or do you think one everything?

01:52 PRAYAS (?) In terms of whoever you consider yourself to be.

01:58 MALAVIKA (?) Okay.

02:00 ADITYA (?) So I would like to look at it in terms of two because it's like, you know, there's this distinction of the image that the there's this idea called the image that you create of yourself.

02:12 Mm-

02:13 And the and the idea that the image is something that is constantly changed with the other kinds of images of you. Can you hear me?

02:22 MALAVIKA One sec, yeah, I think someone's trying to join. Okay. Hello?

02:34 Yeah, hi.

02:37 We can't actually see where you've joined from. We can't see you yet.

02:46 MALAVIKA (?) Right.

02:51 PRAYAS Okay, we can see Dhruv. Yeah, Dhruv is here.

02:58 MALAVIKA Yes, certainly. We've we have we've started, yeah.

03:04 Yeah, sure. I don't think I go on. [?]

03:09 ADITYA Okay, I was just saying that the idea of the self reflection is also the idea of the image that you generate of yourself and the and the possibility of the tr of the reconfiguration that this image goes through in relation to the I would say even go to say that the images that the outside generates of you. So there is a diff there is an idea of your own personal image of what you in have and the image of what you've been you are being perceived as.

03:45 SATYA Aditya is but isn't the creation of these perceptions itself a self reflection?

03:50 ADITYA No, that's what I was arriving at actually, where the it is in the constant negotiation of these two images is where the self reflection arrives. Because somewhere one is somewhere one is trying to seep into it whether to produce a self reflection that is generated by at least psychologically by yourself or a reflection of circumstances external stimuli gives you in terms of the im the image of what other people think of you or perceive of you and things like that. No, there is this famous saying that you know, the image of you only actual image of you only arrives into the world once you're dead, no?

04:33 Right.

04:34 MALAVIKA (?) Right, but that's a different issue altogether. We are talking of how one is able to self reflect not just as an image but even on say one's ongoing being and the actions that are taking place. how do you self reflect?

04:55 DHRUV A part of your question seems to be is it is it even possible and

05:00 MALAVIKA Yes.

05:00 SATYA Yeah.

05:01 DHRUV And I think I would argue it's not. especially because any construction of what you think of yourself that you form will always be in yeah in something of a third person. Even if you try and try and articulate your own actions through a lens, it'll only always be compar comparative.

05:27 SATYA But isn't that still a process of self reflection? Isn't that still a being trying to look at itself?

05:34 DHRUV Trying to. but Yeah, trying to yeah, but necessarily creating an abstract idea of another entity to look at.

05:45 SATYA (?) So you're saying just that even the p act of looking at yourself is not possible because what is the self is undefined.

05:53 DHRUV Yeah, if we you will always have to define it as opposed to what is what is doing the looking.

06:02 MALAVIKA What if I ask you if certain degrees of it is possible? I mean, we're not looking at an absolute yes or no, is it possible or

06:13 MALAVIKA (?) Yeah, it was it would it would be easier to define it on a gradation rather than an absolute.

06:20 PRAYAS Because so Dhruv it seems so you are questioning whether it's possible for us to consider ourselves at all, right?

06:29 DHRUV Yeah. Without creating a different entity called ourselves, which is separate from whatever entity is looking at it.

06:38 PRAYAS What consider as ourselves and what we are actually ourselves are two different things. That's what you say.

06:44 DHRUV Yeah.

06:45 SATYA Yeah, and it's about the mirror looking at itself. Self reflection means is the mirror looking at itself or is the mirror looking at another mirror?

06:55 MALAVIKA That's what's tricky.

06:59 ADITYA But isn't self reflection also a something a practice that happens in retrospect? Do you think self reflection is something that happens like in on an everyday basis or do you think

then you call it a self reflection in that same spirit? You know, for example, the practice of writing diary is in a way is for the longest time a self reflection of almost your everyday. But I don't know whether you call that a self reflection in the same potency or way. Because you're literally reflecting your activities of how you it's not n writing down your activities, but it's basically about how you approach those activities and a kind of a reflection of how you operate it.

07:39 SATYA (?) You're trying to observe yourself.

07:41 ADITYA Yeah. And subconsciously record it in a way.

07:44 SATYA Yeah. And you're observing your past self in probably the hopes of creating a an image of the current self or whatever.

07:54 ADITYA Absolutely.

07:57 KRITTIKA I somehow feel that reflection happens all the time and the question is if the self can accept its reflection.

08:07 ABHAYSINGH Yeah.

08:11 MALAVIKA Yeah, so I was also leading to that question of the difference between reflection and self reflection because I understand that reflection happens after something is formed, an event, an image. and with something that is continuously being formed the reflection is also going to be in a state of change. So

08:44 Getting back to Dhruv's point of whether it is possible at all, I guess it is, but how much are you actually reflecting when you're being in that change or that state of

08:58 DHRUV And how much of it is a reflection of self rather than everything else that you interact with?

09:04 MALAVIKA Yes.

09:05 SATYA (?) And how much of it is the trying to form an image of yourself rather than actually reflecting upon yourself?

09:17 ADITYA (?) Then reflection, that's what you're saying.

09:20 SATYA It could be a very fine line.

09:24 PRAYAS Does it does it matter what it is actually as long as like Krittika said, it is something we can accept as ourselves.

09:35 SATYA If you're able to accept it then perhaps that's fine, but there could be a case where you're unable to you know, if you're a perfectionist for example, and you're just not able to accept that this is myself. I can do this better, I can construct myself better or I can understand myself better.

09:55 MALAVIKA How does one do it? Like what methods can one use to do something like that? Like somebody mentioned writing a diary, but that is a tangible method if other than a tangible method, are there other approaches?

10:14 PRAYAS So you are asking how is it possible to actually arrive at a knowledge of who we are, right?

10:22 MALAVIKA No, I think

10:24 ABHAYSINGH I mean because

10:25 MALAVIKA Not a knowledge of who you are, but because that's again too definitive. I'm asking if there are methods used to just get the self reflection going.

10:42 KRITTIKA Hm. I think one needs to identify a surface, I would say, for being able to perceive the reflection. So some sort of a surface. It could be a person who acts as your mirror, it could be another self in yourself who acts as your mirror. So I thought I could call it just a surface. So we need to identify a self surface for reflection, for self reflection, maybe.

11:13 SATYA Yeah.

11:15 SATYA (?) Because constantly this theme of looking at yourself in a mirror, that's what's happening.

11:23 SATYA (?) Like e like a surface, the mirror is a surface.

11:27 KRITTIKA (?) Yeah. And then the surface mirror tends to be people we know, people we want to impress.

11:35 SATYA (?) It will who impress us maybe, so

11:40 KRITTIKA (?) It's again trying to find what reflection do we write [?], right? And what going back to the original of does the self like the reflection?

11:49 SATYA Right. Like if I don't if somebody's if I'm if I'm interacting with somebody and the way they're responding to me, I'm not happy with that. Is that a reflection of me or is it a reflection of them?

12:03 SATYA (?) And might be giving clues of what I'm doing.

12:06 KRITTIKA (?) Yeah.

12:08 SATYA Of who I am.

12:12 KRITTIKA (?) So, you know, it's also like the projections, right? Who's projecting onto whom?

12:16 SATYA Yeah.

12:19 Yeah, and also what is being projected.

12:25 DHRUV Also there's a distinct especially in a in a in a conversation, that we distinction between reflecting on a conversation and responding to it. Sort of responding to stimulus in real time and then reflecting on it after some time has elapsed. E even if it's a very short amount of time, you would still need it to happen in ha have the event that you're reflecting on happen in history rather than happen in immediate time.

12:53 SATYA Right, like you said, even if it's happening in a current interaction, that response time is still there. So I can reflect on the response and decide to tone down myself. But there is still a past in it.

13:06 DHRUV Yeah, so it's it's more a construct construction of sort of sort of you're trying to create a story in your head as you reflect and then make sense of it.

13:19 But

13:20 Rather than immediately respond to

13:22 ADITYA Is it a is the self reflection then following that is a is a moment of finding some resolution with yourself?

13:33 DHRUV Mo more than resolution I would argue, it's more a m more of more of a meaningful narrative. Like a continuous story that still makes sense as long as you add these new pieces to it.

13:46 ADITYA (?) Yeah, it's like making sense of things as you reflect upon. That's what you're saying.

13:50 DHRUV Yeah, as long as it sort of fits the narrative that you're comfortable with up to that point.

13:55 Class. [?]

13:56 SATYA And maybe it's not resolu it maybe okay, maybe there's a component of resolution but also maybe a qu res component of asking questions about yourself. What questions are arising?

14:08 ADITYA But my only point is the moment of self reflection is triggered by a particular event.

14:18 ADITYA (?) And because it's not an everyday of course you reflect but you're not conscious that you're reflecting. But the

14:24 ABHAYSINGH (?) You're saying it that it's not possible to spontaneously reflect.

14:27 ADITYA No, it is possible to spontaneously reflect, but either it is a is it's a response to a psychological or a physical event that you're okay suddenly responding to because something occurs to you. So what I'm saying is there is a stimulant that actually will make you to reflect upon the self. It's not it is happening that you're sitting somewhere and you're like reflecting on yourself. That's not I don't think that's always the possibility. It is the possibility. But there

is always a stimulant that actually takes you back to that bo maybe perhaps it's a meaningful thing for me to reflect on these aspects of what how things went at this moment.

15:09 SATYA (?) Right. I would agree with that because if you if the brain uses its space to y to constantly self reflect while acting, that would l seem inefficient to me.

15:21 Yeah.

15:21 It's like you're mired in self doubt or something.

15:25 ABHAYSINGH It'd be very dishonest, I would say.

15:27 KRITTIKA (?) Sorry.

15:32 ABHAYSINGH I think we are always reflecting ourselves. Sometimes we are o when we are honestly reflecting that those are the times when we are like seriously thinking on it thinking on what we whatever the past was or and when we are in a conversation, I think we are also reflecting but it's a little less honest. We just

15:59 I mean

16:02 Yeah, we just

16:06 We I think we are always reflecting. We always represent whatever we have reflected or we always Yeah, I think we are always re reflecting ourselves.

16:18 PRAYAS Yeah, I would I would agree with you that I mean, because what Aditya proposed as a trigger but also you agreed the spontaneous reflection, but I think the trigger and the spontaneous reflection are opposed to each other. And like Abhay is saying I would say that we are such self conscious operators that we are at any given point really aware of how what we're doing is adding on or taking away from our narrative.

16:57 DHRUV Hello.

16:58 Have to be conscious of conscious of a narrative that you want to add to in a very specific sort of a way.

17:05 ADITYA But my only point is there that kind of conscious understanding of what the narrative is? Of course I understand there is a there is a composite understanding of what the self is and at least your perception of what your self is. But in terms of what I'm trying to say is that whether the everyday experience or the regular experience that you have has the same kind of potency with which you analyze or reflect upon yourself is what I'm trying to say. Or you l or you reflect upon the moment. Whether what I'm trying to say whether this is an event that happens rarely or do you think it has an everyday role to it?

17:46 ABHAYSINGH I think it has everyday role to it. it really depends on how you see it. If you just accept it as you're reflecting your whatever you're doing, you're learning and that's why you're reflecting and

18:08 Yeah, I mean I've I have come to a point where I would say that everything I do, everything I hear, everything I listen, I reflect to it. My reaction itself would be something like a reflection.

18:26 UTTAM Subjective process the self reflection. I mean there are there might be people like who self reflect a lot and then respond to every stimulus that they get, and there might be some people who just like don't reflect at all and they just like resp I mean react to everything that they receive. You know, I so I think it's a very individual thing.

18:53 DHRUV But would there be a distinction between reacting after self reflection and then you're reacting after greater self re reflection and then reacting spontaneously? Or are they simply variations of reaction time? And all of them have some amount of self ref reflection involved in them since you're conscious of your own person.

19:16 UTTAM I think I mean I didn't understand the last part. it was too fast for me. But the first part I think if you are self reflecting I think that is and resp that would be a response. It wouldn't be a reaction. I don't know. I see like reaction as something which is spontaneous that doesn't involve any thinking process, just like a knee-jerk reaction. That's how I saw a reaction as. But if you are reflecting on something and then giving your response that's more of a thoughtful response.

19:53 PRAYAS Yeah. So transitioning to our second question for the for the day from here because let's say we all agree that there is some kind of
20:08 Self reflection that is possible.
20:12 PRAYAS (?) Okay.
20:13 So there's some conception of self reflection that everyone can accept that it occurs. So if I would invite you to reflect on the question whether to the question whether everyone should be a parent.
20:35 UTTAM Sorry, everyone should
20:38 PRAYAS You reflect on the
20:39 MALAVIKA (?) To be a parent.
20:40 PRAYAS Whether everyone should be a parent and I and then we'll also reflect on that from the position of our parents. So no it's more of a thought experiment. It's not that we actually want to delve with the with the with the question of parenthood, but as a as a as a possibility if I invite you to reflect on this.
21:10 How would it be for you?
21:15 SATYA Maybe each one of us round the room can answer this question in a few sentences as our parent and as ourselves.
21:32 PRAYAS Yes, so the I mean the
21:34 PRAYAS (?) Yeah.
21:38 The question of course takes into consideration whether because the parenthood is about it's a process where you come into existence or you bring someone else into existence. So if you don't for example agree that you know parenthood is essentially a process that everyone should perform, then how do you then question your own existence and how do you negotiate with that?
22:12 MALAVIKA I see parenthood not necessarily as something that is responsible for bringing an entity into being, but also but instead I see it as I am not a parent but I see a parent as being some somebody who has the ability to nurture.
22:40 MALAVIKA (?) So I can assume the role of a parent for somebody.
22:48 PRAYAS So but then if you now think from your own parents' perspective.
22:58 And how would your response change then?
23:05 MALAVIKA I think the response would be a little more definite that it is definitely a valuable journey to be a parent, especially for somebody who has
23:19 MALAVIKA (?) Like given birth to children, you know, their offspring. So I think my parents would definitely vouch for that.
23:34 MALAVIKA (?) It's quite different from the way I think.
23:36 PRAYAS Right. So I mean in your reflection you are able to distance your own
23:47 Your own position from the position that brought you into existence. I mean, for you that's not necessarily a conflict.
23:55 MALAVIKA Yeah, it's not a conflict. Yeah, it's not a conflict.
24:00 And I will say that specifically from my gender point of view also, being
24:14 MALAVIKA (?) Being a woman who can potentially mother or you know
24:24 Give birth to another being, I
24:28 I still feel that it that biological process is not necessary to feel or understand an idea of parenthood.
24:44 HEMAVATHY (?) Two. [?]
24:51 PRAYAS So any other responses? Any of the news [?] would like to take up the thought experiment?
25:00 ABHAYSINGH (?) No, it's different.
25:01 UTTAM (?) Sorry, go ahead, Greg [?].

25:04 Yeah, I mean I think like reflecting on parenthood I think like being vulnerable to like more perspectives I would say and creating a surface through these self reflections. I don't know if it makes sense but the thing is j just being like open putting yourself among a new viewpoints and then trying to like further understand yourself through your reflection.

25:56 Because like your children s are o are also can be seen as like your reflection and because your genetic code translates to your children. So in a way they're also your image.

26:08 MALAVIKA (?) Yeah.

26:13 PRAYAS (?) But what is the imperative of that position that you

26:18 MALAVIKA Because genetic code, like genetic code can also be affected by environment.

26:27 SATYA But I think

26:27 If we stick if we stick with the genetic the nature part where there are some patterns which repeat, right? Like our parents may have some patterns and we might identify the same patterns within ourselves because we see them. So if we s only stick with that part. Maybe if you could stick with just that part and what do you think?

26:50 UTTAM (?) Th think in terms of like the same question, like what yeah

26:55 UTTAM (?) Thank you.

26:57 Yeah.

27:03 UTTAM (?) Maybe I'll just draw I mean, add after someone else's viewpoint. I mean I think I need a little bit of time to think on this.

27:13 DHRUV I think there is enough variation between generations despite a large chunk of the genetic code repeating, that i every individual is a sen essentially pr essentially an independent entity. Does it doesn't matter if the parents point of view doesn't wouldn't matter unless it is vehemently imposed upon the other individual.

27:45 MALAVIKA (?) Right. So using

27:47 DHRUV Just the genetic code there's nothing inside the genetic code that'll create the compulsion to become parent for the next for the offspring. It would it would have to be it would have to come from nurture and other social considerations.

28:04 PRAYAS So it's not a self replicating code you're saying.

28:08 DHRUV No it isn't. It ha it has the possibility of s it is not a self replicating or definitely not. yeah, but it has possibility of replication.

28:20 PRAYAS Right.

28:24 UTTAM But in that way, like every person or every living creature has like cell division happening every day, right? So are we parents of ourselves?

28:34 DHRUV But there isn't there isn't enough mutation that happens when you have a mitotic cell division. It just splits and then it duplicates the DNA code.

28:44 ABHAYSINGH (?) Right.

28:44 DHRUV So there is more

28:46 MALAVIKA (?) Third term [?]. Sorry, go ahead.

28:48 DHRUV Yeah.

28:48 Sorry. it's more of a cloning process than a reproduction process because you don't have distinct bits of code that gets combined.

28:57 UTTAM Right. Right.

29:00 MALAVIKA Uttam, I was gonna ask, how do you reflect on the same question from your own parents' point of view?

29:06 UTTAM (?) From my own parents' point of view

29:11 I think I mean like

29:16 They understand this thing in like a very abstract sense. I mean they might not look at parenthood the same way the way I see I mean like I look at I tend to look at things in a more scien-

tific or technical perspective and they try to look at things in a more poetic or philosophical perspective. and for some things like they say oh it's the maybe like sometimes they say it's God, sometimes they say it's nature and sometimes they say science. So it's like a more mixed thing. but I tend to look more in terms of like science and nature. I mean metaphysical of sorts. I would say they would look at things in that way.

30:06 PRAYAS But a as Dhruv was saying that this is I mean parenthood is an aspect would that would depend more on social and cultural factors? I mean that's the reason why we chose the thought experiment because we feel it's a very polarizing question because the way we have phrased it with a should. So is there a particular imperative on us that makes it a question of should or is it I mean which side of the polar perspective would you place yourself on? How would you give yourself the choice or not?

30:54 UTTAM (?) Whether to be a parent or not.

30:56 PRAYAS (?) Yeah.

31:02 UTTAM I mean like is like with b do you talking about like biological parent or are it just talking about like adopting parents?

31:10 MALAVIKA What I do speculate. [?]

31:11 PRAYAS Your idea of parenthood is that is that not being important because the performance of the role is basically the known [?] yeah.

31:22 UTTAM Yeah.

31:23 PRAYAS Mm.

31:27 UTTAM I think pi in my opinion, like parenthood is a desire to perfect like a better image of yourself. I think that's what parenthood is. I mean there is one image that you see when you self-reflect and I mean because like time keeps moving and you can't change like certain actions and if you want to like make those corrections, right? And that's when I think like you tend to like correct those mistakes in your child and then make a better image of yourself, maybe even better, I would say. Something more than your best.

32:14 PRAYAS Right. So you think the impulse to the question of parenthood is more about furthering the

32:24 The self.

32:26 UTTAM Right.

32:27 PRAYAS In the

32:27 What do you think Anuj?

32:30 ANUJ Yeah can you hear me?

32:32 PRAYAS Yeah.

32:32 MALAVIKA Yeah.

32:33 ANUJ Yeah. I've been thinking you

32:39 Isn't the parent or

32:45 The parent itself. I mean like the parent wants to bring up the child

32:55 As close to him or her

32:58 Yeah.

33:04 Yeah.

33:07 This is about oneself, you know.

33:12 Very kind

33:23 Process because reflection is basically

33:28 Is basically coming out of yourself to see a part of you or

33:38 Yeah.

33:47 It is both. It is it is biological

33:51 It is some it is psychological.

34:00 Does a mother make a child or does the child make the mother? I think in the process of in the process of both making each other, they are forming each other. And so they are reflecting upon each other in the process of making each other. So I think it's a dialectical process. So it is very difficult to kind of answer whether, first of all, I have for all this while I have been thinking about the should.

34:20 Okay.

34:25 Thank you.

34:38 Each other.

34:40 PRAYAS So you're saying in the performance of the of being one of the duality of with your with your own parent, yeah. One is already parenting the parent and in that sense assuming that role.

34:56 ANUJ Right.

35:00 ADITYA (?) Wha what was the question again? Sorry, I completely I think there were so many parental conversations that happened. I actually lost the track of the past what was the question? Prayas, can you repeat?

35:11 PRAYAS Reflect on whether everyone should be a parent. Please answer this question taking on the persona of your own parent as well.

35:19 ADITYA Well, it's kind of funny because I would like to be a parent if actually it gives me kind of a leeway from my midlife crisis, you know. J it can just be it can just be like a negotiation that I go, yeah, I can I can become a parent so that I can I don't have this midlife crisis kind of conversation with people. Listen, I have a kid and you know, I can just chill out and the people will not ask me about oh what, you're old now and stuff like that, you know. I mean to say that the reflection in terms of reflection of being a parent for me personally may be just that because of thinking about okay certain questions you're not being asked because just because you're a parent. Okay. And at the same time I actually agree with some of what being said about yeah, parent basically you the parents try to project images of what they couldn't be onto the ch children.

36:15 ADITYA (?) Often.

36:17 But I'm not very sure whether it's the reflection of the their own selves in a way, but it's maybe kind of both analysis of their own self at the same time extending w what their self could be, which they could not achieve, but perhaps they can achieve in another image. Does that make sense?

36:38 PRAYAS Right. I mean for me what Anuj was proposing actually that it was it was actu I think combining all these perspectives that we have shared that the role of the parent is not necessarily linked to parenthood. so he was proposing as far as what I could gather that you placing yourself in the in the duality, you parent the parent and so that makes it not necessary for you to think of

37:20 ADITYA But then parent is parent the organizing principle, you know. J just abstract it completely. I if you say something, for example, no, you have the master server or think about the parent server.

37:33 ADITYA (?) Right.

37:33 ADITYA (?) And do you think then the then the then the parent is the organizing principle through which of course there are many organising principles, I'm not saying there's one parent. But then can we abstract it into a level where you think of it as the organising principle?

37:48 PRAYAS Yeah, n not as a organizing principle but as a you know, what Anuj was saying as basically more of a dialogical process.

37:57 -huh.

37:58 With that basically necessitates a kind of back and forth.

38:07 ADITYA You mean teaching and learning or teaching each other?

38:09 PRAYAS In learning so what we had Uttam say as I think Uttam or Malavika was saying that about nurturing. So about nurturing and being nurtured, right? So those are roles which one are interchangeably play played by you know a child and parent child parent child. So

38:36 ADITYA I mean that.

38:37 MALAVIKA Your experience as a parent also would be interesting

38:43 PRAYAS (?) I mean m my own experience as a parent is actually very close to this and that's why maybe it makes sense to me in the sense that I don't think I'm successful in setting out an example at the time, which is what the is the expectation is of the parent that you're kind of you know captaining the ship or you know as far as the child is concerned, you are the one who was who is going to set the example or set the perimeters of what can be imagined.

39:25 I mean find it perfectly reasonable to actually accept that I'm not able to do that. And

39:36 Maybe I just allow the I mean I can easily imagine that you know my child to be going outside the bounds of my imagination.

39:52 ANUJ Yeah.

39:54 I also feel that like the question

40:01 Question should everyone be a parent for me is no because parenthood can be a very institutionalizing process or an institutional kind of you know process it you know the parent might and it can be just a one-way

40:18 Yeah.

40:19 Imparting of whatever values, knowledge and in that sense it is always backward looking. And I don't know if parent per parenthood should be about that. Like it's very ironical that we always learn things from our

40:39 Yeah.

40:42 Mm-

40:48 Productive.

40:52 PRAYAS (?) Right.

40:54 ADITYA But even though it's not productive, personally, if I was to think then that's person a lot of it is the first school. I actually agree with you when you say that, you know, it's in a way it's I'm not saying counterproductive, but it's like almost instituting a one way knowledge, you're always looking from the above to the down in terms of your gaze and then trying to institute your knowledge that you consider noble to be somebody else's and they have to take it on board as noble and the way to go ahead. Yeah.

41:24 MALAVIKA That's what Prayas was actually trying to say that and I will say that I've I won't say that everybody I would actually say that everybody should be a parent because there's something that you get parent because you can parent an idea for all

41:44 SATYA Wondo. [?]

41:47 MALAVIKA I'm also wondering if it's an if there's a tendency to do to do it, to become a parent sometimes even without knowing you're a parent.

41:59 KRITTIKA Yeah, Malavika, I think I agree with you that we all learn from parenting and I strongly feel that you don't need another person to be parenting. I think you can parent yourself. And once you've learned to parent yourself, then in my personal opinion, is one ready to parent somebody else.

42:20 SATYA No, but why should you have to parent anything?

42:23 SATYA (?) Right.

42:26 ANUJ But in that case sorry.

42:29 SATYA If I if I sorry, if I answer this question from my parents' perspective, they would say that it's an individual's choice. Should everybody be a parent? Then my parents would say, ki, it's your choice. You it's you know, we cannot dictate anything to anybody. And if you ask me, I would go in a radical direction where I attack the word should. You know, for me it's like too much imposition, you know?

42:54 ADITYA It's too much of a social code, ki you know, you have to th as if that's the only a way of giving back or like contributing, you know, not giving back but contribution of some kind.

43:06 ADITYA (?) I mean I

43:07 MALAVIKA Is it looked at as contribution or is it similar looked at as

43:13 MALAVIKA (?) Having no

43:14 MALAVIKA (?) Take it at a as an abstract level of care.

43:19 SATYA Yeah. That's I see what you're saying when you talk about parenting an idea, I absolutely see it. Like that caring, right? That sort of that those nurturing that sense of taking care of something. Yeah.

43:31 MALAVIKA (?) Like yeah, you're creating an artwork, you're also parenting like Krittika says yourself, you're paying attention to details, not necessarily trying to shape it in one particular vision or one particular way, but you're it's more of an exploration.

43:49 MALAVIKA (?) Yeah, and you're sensitive to it, you're opening yourself up to it, you're opening your values a little to it, you know.

43:54 Yeah, I don't look at it as a one way thing of feeding information and trying to say this is how things should be, but I see it more as an exploration of maybe finer nuances of one's own self.

44:10 SATYA Yeah, I hear you. I just still feel that whether I should be parenting even myself or whether anyone should be, that's really up to them.

44:22 SATYA (?) And you know.

44:24 MALAVIKA Yeah, that is true. Maybe should is a kind of a harsh word.

44:33 SATYA It's a polarizing word, yeah.

44:35 KRITTIKA (?) Yeah, the should go away and then we should predefined pairings [?] probably.

44:40 MALAVIKA Yeah.

44:41 PRAYAS Yeah, in our formulation it was we chose that word I mean, you know, consciously because we wanted to see where which side of the of the divide you would place yourself on. so Satya would you like to take over from here? for the

45:02 SATYA Okay, that sounds good. we'll move on to the third question and the third question is does self reflection have any value? So does self reflection have any value?

45:18 And I think I didn't expect you know, when Dhruv brought up the point whether self reflection is even possible. So if it's not even possible, what is the meaning of value?

45:33 MALAVIKA (?) Yeah, i the

45:34 DHRUV The question if you look if you look at it from that point of view becomes an oxymoron right yeah if self-re reflection has value then you need to be able to identify i identify the self in question and if it has if it has no value then you automatically but then it doesn't exist and then you can if I were to

46:01 SATYA What if I say that the trial of self reflection, maybe that has value, does it?

46:07 DHRUV Yeah, the process of attempting it.

46:10 SATYA Yeah, the process of attempt, yes. Does that have any value?

46:14 DHRUV Yeah, I would say that certainly has value. Though if that has value for if that has any merit for achieving self reflection or not, I'm not sure, but value inherently as a process, yes, definitely.

46:29 SATYA (?) Right. So what kind of value do you think that has?

46:33 DHRUV I think it one, because self-reflection is a retrospective act, it forces you to put s put s experiences in a in a particular order and then try and build on them and keep doing that it iteratively. So it's like a d a data repository system, sort of a something that refreshes your database and then reassembles it.

46:58 SATYA Yeah, and you're able to attenuate your behaviour or recalibrate it or something.

47:03 DHRUV Yeah. Like click a reset point.

47:06 SATYA Mm but then Abhay had also mentioned about how there is a constant process of self reflection going on. I can see the value I can see from that perspective, you know, you're able to in the moment make try to make yourself have a better response. But what I was also thinking was if you spend your energy as a counterpoint to constantly observe what you're doing, aren't you confusing yourself?

47:38 Won't is there not a d danger of confusing yourself?

47:44 ABHAYSINGH I mean we all have confusions but we do grow from it and we if the question is that should I be reflecting what I'm conversation? I mean that's a very natural thing I would say.

48:11 SATYA Why do you think the brain does that?

48:17 ABHAYSINGH I think that's a very natural thing we do. We think 'cause our brain thinks. So it's a constant process. We just keep on thinking. The moment we become we even when we are unconscious, our brain is constantly working, right?

48:34 ABHAYSINGH (?) Yeah. Mm-

48:36 ABHAYSINGH (?) So I think Yeah. Mm- Go ahead.

48:41 SATYA So I guess if we imagine that a natural process such as the brain doing this thing constantly, it seems to be doing it for a good reason and therefore it does have a value. In that sense, if we were to look just observe nature, there does seem to be a value to self reflection.

49:02 ABHAYSINGH Yeah, absolutely. I mean our own self identity all our experiences, all our reflections, I mean that's what we have done till now. And that's what we are capable of doing and that's what we keep on doing.

49:21 PRAYAS Yeah, so if we even take away if we even consider the question whether self reflection is possible or not the you know the attempt to self reflect will to some degree you know make you consider yourself, even if that is not self reflection, even if that is what we were talking about earlier an externalization of yourself in some way, even then what Abhay is saying is even in that form it has values.

50:00 SATYA Right. Now I think there is a balance. Yeah, go ahead, Krittika, go ahead.

50:06 KRITTIKA I was just thinking, Satya, the minute you say ask this question to yourself, does self reflection have any value? Then I'm wondering if the self reflection already is biased because you're trying to find a value in your reflection.

50:24 So we all agree.

50:28 ABHAYSINGH (?) Sorry, what just

50:29 KRITTIKA (?) So yeah, very

50:31 ABHAYSINGH I'm sorry I'm sorry. I'm sorry to cut you but I just that I was saying that's why we all are here to like reflect our thoughts and reflect what we think.

50:46 KRITTIKA Value, don't you think like already the idea of value and evaluation and a price or some sort of a commercialization if we try to put it in terms of material ways

50:59 Right.

50:59 Let's think on a different level than just s saying it do it for just doing its sake and not because it's valuable or has any value.

51:09 SATYA (?) That's what I thought.

51:09 KRITTIKA Already alter the whole process.

51:12 SATYA That's very true. You're observing the observer. And by doing so you are interfering with the process.

51:20 KRITTIKA Something like that, yeah.

51:21 Yeah.

51:23 DHRUV But if it were a sorry.

51:26 ANUJ No, go ahead.

51:27 DHRUV But if it were a detrimental process, if it was a process of interference, then it would not it would neither happen naturally nor happen continuously. And that is something I think we all agree it does happen. I mean people do self reflect. and it would it would at least biologically be considered ridiculous to do that. Which it is not. So it inherently has s i it inherently seems to have value, even if just in the biological chain of things.

51:57 But I would think that self reflection at least.

52:01 SATYA I would argue is that

52:04 ABHAYSINGH Danger.

52:05 ABHAYSINGH (?) Go ahead, Aditya.

52:06 ADITYA No, I was just saying considering coming from the artistic context, I think for one of the be one of the biggest trajectories of thinking and in that way aesthetic value to think per se is actually created a lot with self reflection, whether it be in drama, poetry or in visual art, if you if you can't say the a certain form of self reflection and the image that they generate with this self reflection was so central to I would say a lot of modernist like you know, practitioners in that way. So that way there is a history of people who has taken self reflection as the fundamental creative drive, no? Right.

52:49 SATYA (?) That's if there's a value of that sort, where there isn't creative value.

52:54 ADITYA Ready to wait. [?]

52:55 SATYA (?) Yeah.

52:57 SATYA (?) Yeah.

52:59 Yes, please.

53:00 ANUJ Yeah, I was just thinking that if

53:06 Like aren't we just

53:13 Because it is only reflection that affirms the self. we exist only in our reflections. Do we do we exist other

53:22 SATYA We maybe we do, maybe we don't. We exist to ourselves in our own self reflection perhaps.

53:28 ANUJ Right. Right. Mm. And it's so I was just thinking that because it is our reflections that constitute us

53:39 Otherwise yes, there's the question of the being.

53:42 But is there

53:49 SATYA (?) So you're saying that without self reflection there is not even a being for myself, which means if having that process happen has an inherent value to me for defining or for even being aware of myself.

54:04 ANUJ Yeah.

54:05 ADITYA So I would go to an extent to say that the reflection is the process through which the fiction called the self is generated.

54:13 SATYA (?) Right.

54:15 ADITYA (?) It's basically then basically you have to produce a fiction of the self. That and I would say reflection is a process through which the fictional existence of this is being r produced and reproduced and regenerated in different forms.

54:31 ANUJ But Aditya then I'll ask you, is there any point in generating the self? Is there any value to that?

54:36 ADITYA Well, I would go back to what is said at some point because sometimes the reproduction and the regeneration becomes inevitable. You actually have no choice. It's the most intuitive capacities through which you work because you're not it's not like a choice of taking up a job or not taking up a job. It's the it's the process it's the process of the intuitive response to something that will actually guide to reflect on the self, which is not sometimes you're very conscious of. Sometimes you're very conscious of maybe you have that, you know, maybe in a

public context like this we are actually talking about self in a more composed way. But actually when the reflection happens it might just be a momentary intuitive response to something or general response to like a context that you have you approach. But I'm not very sure whether you always have the choice of going into it or not going into it. That's the trick.

55:29 SATYA Right, so right. So it's not even a question of whether there's a value or not, really. It's happening and that's just how it is.

55:36 PRAYAS Yeah but I would link back to what Dhruv was saying earlier that if it if there was no value then it wouldn't be happening at all. So because if you think of if you think of actions and processes that happen within ourselves in a in a s in a kind of economic economical sense why would a process happen or survive or sustain if there were no value in it?

56:14 SATYA (?) Exactly. Exactly. Like the why is the brain self reflecting? There is seems to be some evolutionary value to it, so it's there.

56:20 SATYA (?) Exactly.

56:20 SATYA (?) Yeah.

56:21 ADITYA No, there is an definitely an evolutionary and a creative value because I think the m the if you even took at literature or other thing, somewhere the reflection of the self is always presumed to be the more authentic, you know?

56:34 Yeah.

56:35 Author who is talking about his self, nobody actually questions him whether it's the truth or whether the truth is a fiction.

56:42 ADITYA (?) Right. Right.

56:44 There is an i there is an understood fact as if he is talking about his self, then maybe it's the truth.

56:50 SATYA The authenticity of it, yeah.

56:51 ADITYA (?) Authenticity of it and sometimes the self reflective kind of tendency makes it m way more authentic than actually of course history does it partly but in a in a kind of an emotional at the same time personal way. If you it has a very interesting authenticity attached to it. Yes like

57:09 SATYA (?) Truly is or isn't, it has the appearance of it at least.

57:15 ADITYA Like the self portrait, for instance.

57:18 ADITYA (?) Right. Right. Yeah. You're sort of opening yourself up.

57:21 MALAVIKA Not in that direct process of self reflection. What because at the moment of doing the self portrait you're not really self reflecting, you are it's a different state of mind. You're not so conscious of the reflection.

57:41 KRITTIKA (?) You're more self reproducing, I would say, right, in a portrait rather than reflecting, no?

57:45 KRITTIKA (?) It's more surface like.

57:47 MALAVIKA Yeah, I yeah, I wonder. I actually don't know what happens.

57:53 SATYA And it might be different for different approaches, right? Like for somebody who's looking at themselves in a mirror, they might be considering themselves in a different way, just not just the surface, but they could be confronting themselves.

58:09 ADITYA Yeah.

58:11 MALAVIKA Yeah, there's also this aspect of representation and an expression because I see that with art when you're actually making a work of art the expression is not very consciously self reflective. You are

58:33 I'm not sure if that the level of consciousness of that self reflection is really happening. You're reflecting, yes, but I don't know how much you're focusing on that self all the time. You're reflecting on many things. And the self is finds its way. Yeah, it gets shaped through that.

58:50 SATYA (?) And that's the image that comes out eventually on the canvas.

58:54 ADITYA (?) Also, but the that might just be the reflection might be just the trigger that systematizes into certain language codes as we speak.

59:02 MALAVIKA (?) True.

59:04 ADITYA Yeah, it can just become like, you know, I want to reflect but my the way I would like to reflect is to write a novel or make a painting. But the since the virtue of the codes and languages these things are saying, it might actually take that reflection into a completely even sometimes counter to what I was actually imagining.

59:20 MALAVIKA (?) Yeah, exactly. And the self is there right through that process. But you're not always conscious of it.

59:27 ADITYA I'm just saying. That's for sure.

59:29 ANUJ But this self is also constantly mutating and it's not a monolithic entity, no? It's not a true

59:36 Never.

59:36 It's a very homogeneous thing.

59:39 ADITYA (?) It's a fragmented entity, I would say.

59:41 ANUJ Yeah. I and that makes I mean that's why I feel all the more that without reflection the self cannot be deciphered. Because it's a continuous kind of changing arc.

59:56 SATYA Without reflection the self cannot be deciphered. Therefore, sh can we say that the value of reflection is to decipher the self? There is a value in that.

01:00:06 ANUJ Yeah.

01:00:12 SATYA (?) I wanted to get into sort of the opposite question of too much

01:00:15 Self reflection.

01:00:16 SATYA (?) Which can lead to self doubt, but we are at four forty PM or sorry, it's eight, ten or whatever in India. I guess it's time for us to wrap up, yeah?

01:00:27 PRAYAS Yeah. I was just some comments that we will be getting in touch with each of you individually to just have a brief conversation about how this experience was because j because like you mentioned we are writing about this process in our essay. So we will have to maybe you know, set a time with each of you individually in the coming week and then maybe I'll have a brief conversation.

01:01:03 Okay.

01:01:03 Thanks everyone for joining and I think we'll stop the discussion here.

01:01:10 Thank you.

01:01:11 PRAYAS (?) Okay.

01:01:12 ADITYA Thanks everyone.

01:01:13 ADITYA (?) Yeah.

01:01:13 ADITYA (?) Nice.

01:01:14 ABHAYSINGH (?) Thank you.