

Subject–space: what does the subjective relation with a singular space reveal about ourselves, our identity, and our “I”, and how does the subjective enrichment of the designing spaces improve our sense of self

Abstract

In our relationship with the external world, whether it is the objects, the spaces, the buildings, or the people, we have to be aware of the advantage of understanding the importance of subjective reality. We highlight not removing the objective attitude but giving space to the subjective experience. The objective experience must exist with the complementary subjective experience, and the rationality must be complemented with the irrationality because our nature has both. So, we attempt to clarify the necessity of creating architecture that allows people to have a subjective experience. This statement is not only about the feeling but also about the identity, the “I”, and the self. Identity always influences our thoughts, behaviours, aptitudes, and our (lack) feelings. What may change and condition our identity’s endeavour is our “I” the source of will, worries, fears, bravery, search for happiness, love, hate, and revenge. The self is all the qualities of the “I”, adding the self-awareness and the consciousness of the human being’s nature. In these terms, it is essential to develop a reflection (an introspection) about our relationship with the external world and, with a special tone, with all sorts of spaces to have a more profound conscience about what we are since we can do what we like, instead of living anywhere without any sense of criticism or any criteria as all around us have to be as it is, without possibility to change, or simply without knowing that it needs or have to be changed.

Keywords: space, I, identity, self, subjectivity, consciousness

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Introduction

This study is about the subjective meanings (more than the objective ones) we associate with the experience of space (or an object) that reveals our inner self. Those subjective (and objective) meanings may be described through what we say about an existing space with which we have a relationship. But it may also be developed when we design a space (or an object or artwork) under our subjective and sensible way of thinking, that’s to say, overcoming the objective reality, expressing our feelings, our symbolic and aesthetic senses.

The meanings are structural when developed through the language to create an objective discourse about something. That structure is also influenced by our subjectivity, sometimes struggling with it, other times letting it go with freedom. When we give a negative sense to the meaning of something (like a space), we compress our subjective reality, limiting our feeling of freedom and sensibility. On the other hand, if we associate a positive sense to the meaning of something (a space, an object, a person, etc.), we are opening our inner space and consequently getting more freedom in sensibility and consciousness.

Language, as a tool to develop the discourse, is a two-face coin: it develops our consciousness or may (or may not) retract our unconscious. Our absolute freedom is only possible by balancing conscious (deliberate thinking) and unconscious (instinctive energy). So, we should use language as a constructive way of thinking about objective reality and try to become sensible, that is, understanding and working them, adding the subjective meanings and shapes, and making it accessible to the unconscious. This applies to the architect design language as well.

In this context, the reflection presented here will attempt to approach the understanding of how we may get more consciousness by developing feelings in the relationship with a particular space. During the essay, we will realize how discourse and design about space may contribute to a more efficient architectural design in the human value issue if we develop subjective meanings simultaneously.

We will also understand how we may amplify our identity. If we feel free to experiment or speak about the space we are using or want to design, we can let our feelings flow to get a unique space with its identity. That’s the reason why we will argue about the importance of a more profound understanding of the subject’s inner self to bring the architectural design closer to the human subjective need, even without forgetting the objective need.

This approach is not properly about aesthetics, such as composing shapes, nor about a philosophical approach. More than that, it will be about how the feelings and the unconscious may influence the experience and the design of a space if they have a freer relationship with the rationality and judgement of consciousness.

We think that the union of perception, thinking, designing and creation, discourse and materialization with the balance between objective and subjective realities is the ideal circumstance to increase awareness of our true self, and consequently, we become more able to create a unique space, shape, building, object, and artwork. That means that the architects will improve their work if they realize how important it is to build their own identity, getting closer to their genuine “I”, to achieve the design spaces with original identities.

The theoretical basis of this study is psychoanalysis and its application to the explanation of the subjective relation between the subject and the space. So, we will apply some concepts of psychoanalysis to reflect on the human nature, particularly on the relationship between the subject and the object which the idea of "space" in architecture will replace, i.e., the building and the space are the objects with what we keep a relationship. From the outset, it should be stressed that the theoretical basis will be an apodictical essay and, above all, a psychoanalytic approach. It is not a psychology approach because the latter focuses more on the behavioural surface than what lies beneath consciousness, i.e., the subconscious, deep memories and feelings: that's to say, more on the personality and less the identity is about than what the self and the real and profound "I" are about.

In this context, as a preliminary contextualization, several questions shall be raised on which to reflect:

- 1) What characteristics make us different from others, i.e., that contribute to shaping our identity?
- 2) What are the differences between "personality" and "identity"?
- 3) Which aspects of our behaviour are affected by the particular characteristics of each one of us?
- 4) Since feelings are subjective to each person, what can we understand by "feelings"?
- 5) To what extent can a space or a thing trigger specific feelings in each of us?
- 6) Which physical, symbolic or aesthetic characteristics may affect us?

From another perspective, some aspects need to be discerned:

- 1) To what extent does interpreting objects or spaces allow us to reveal an interpretation of ourselves?
- 2) Is the design of a unique space or object the result of our personality? Or of our identity? Which is the more important in the work of conceiving a unique shape?

Some questions will be clarified here; others will be kept open.

Contextualization

If a certain space, object or person arouses some satisfaction or dissatisfaction, it could mean that there is a certain harmony or disharmony with our inner self, considering our past, present and future, respectively, our past experience, the phenomenon of consciousness (in the present) and expectations (in the future).¹

Following the thoughts of James Elkins,¹ we may wonder about the importance of the following ideas about the thesis "The Object Stares Back": The gaze as a means of capturing and being captured; the gaze in which thoughts of the need to use, possess, own, fix, appropriate, keep, remember and commemorate, value, borrow and steal are always underlying. These mentioned ideas of Elkins drive us to other interrogations: If the gaze is directed outwards to understand it, is there any improvement in how we understand our interior? If the gaze is a mechanism for uniting the self and the object (the non-self),

what will we earn with that in terms of our self-knowledge? Is the gaze accompanied by our self-biography, having it as a factor that influences our relationship with objects and as content awakened by that relationship? Or does the contrary happen as well?

Whatever binds us to the past (or prevents us from being proactive) for example, difficulty in understanding, a lack of experience or learning, fears or a sense of guilt conditions the experience of the moment, i.e., the phenomenon of awareness and sensitization, and the idea of our own identity but also the expectations about our further relationships, success and happiness.

Memories and their underlying feelings have a special role in constructing our identity. Moreover, we react to different spaces, objects, and people being influenced not only by our memories but also by experience, values, and culture. In the same sense, we have to underline not only the past but also expectations on the future (that we will be happy, peaceful or prosperous or the opposite) influence the experience of a relationship with a space, object or person in addition to the fact that our experience, in turn, influences expectations themselves (about a space, object or person).

What we think about our identity is also influenced by the past, by our experience with the pre-existing context, particularly by ethical rules and socio-cultural and religious heritage. These guidelines manifestly or tacitly influence our free will and the idea of the inner self. This happens when we adopt behaviours or understandings based on assumptions we don't question or cannot explain. But if we question the pre-ordered meaning of things, if we significantly alter the objectivity of the regular or normative order of concepts, spaces, objects, behaviours, attitudes and reactions we will be driven to search for a certain logic or emotional balance and be led to a more subjective experience, which is closer to our self and our identity. We mean that it is helpful to have a more profound and sensible experience by creating unusual circumstances, whatever the object we have a relationship with.

A space (an object or a person), if it doesn't cause a break in routines or uncritical and pre-ordered understandings, may not create movement in the thought-feeling relationship. For example, when the relationship keeps us connected to the past without any sensation (emotion or feeling) or need to understand better, there may be no awakening of consciousness or, even less, of the unconscious.

It should be noted that, according to neuroscientist António Damásio,² consciousness is associated with emotions and feelings: it begins when our organism (body) has a change at the same time we feel something. Consequently, awareness can be enhanced by sensitive dynamics. This will be possible, for example, by changing external (and internal) circumstances to cause the need for an internal adjustment about what (in that space or object) is new, strange or unknown. When we face strangeness, illogic or the unknown, emotion is activated by the need to rebalance the feeling of discomfort (incomprehension, fear or dread in the face of the new disorder of things), and our organism is modified. That is when the feelings, emotions, affections, and relationship between unconscious and consciousness are awakened, and we can change our minds and thoughts about our identity and have a more profound feeling and consciousness.

Subjectivity (sensitivity, affections, emotions and feelings) that's what is closer to our organism and body manifestation - is reflected in our relationship with spaces and objects. Moreover, their lowest level (subjective and sensitive) from interpersonal relationships can also affect our relationships with objective realities (such as spaces and objects). In turn, the objectivity of our relationships, when

¹For objects and persons with which we are familiar, we have relatively rich permanent files, and it is the contents of these files that primarily count as our beliefs about the thing or person in question. Such beliefs provide the extra or incremental information we have to bring to bear on our interactions with these objects and persons, in addition to what we perceive about them at the time of a given interaction." (Perry 2002: 202).

subjectivized (for example, by the affections or artist and architect creations), that is, when their objective order is subjected to a sensitive reordering, can trigger the subjective dynamics of the person (for example, the author, the spectator or the user) who relates to them. In this sensitivity phenomenon, certain intersubjectivity is established between the subjectivity of the person who intervenes in the space or object and the subjectivity of the person who relates to them.

Thus, what we can suggest is that it is helpful to develop a subjective intervention in the spatial-formal field, where we may be driven to look for the meaning of the (apparent) illogic in the order of things, creating a new logic from their subjectivity, close to our inner stability. This emotional reestablishment dynamizes the unconscious and, thus, the consciousness. In other words, the architect, the designer, the user and the viewer of a new or sometimes strange space are encouraged to find balance in subjective and sensible experiences.

So, we can analyze the circumstances with which we reorganize (or disorganize) the pre-existing order of things creating a different logic, for example, unrealistic scenarios or sacred spaces and check the new meaning and sense of the new (re)organization that creates discomfort or disappointment. We shall have in mind that the evolution of this phenomenon with objective realities based on the need to adapt to new, unknown or misunderstood situations influences and activates not only our subjective relationship with ourselves but also as Perry³ says, to a lower (more subjective) level with other people.

Changes in the normal order of a space, to the logic of an object's functionality, or to our perception of a person's identity also cause an inevitable internal destabilization in the face of an immediate inability to understand and explain the external changes. It can create a need for emotional rebalancing, which is associated with an immersion into the unconscious more than in consciousness, in other words, a feeling of the inner self. That's why we state the advantage of creating unusual circumstances in the design of a space, thinking in its special experience, like the architects do when designing, for instance, a church.

The concepts of consciousness, unconscious and affect in the development of the curatorial project

To develop an approach to the meaning of a given space and the relationship we have with it, it is fundamental to assume the importance of the role of emotional, sentimental and affective circumstances as the most immediate, spontaneous and precise aspects that make a space unique in our experience with it, in its conception and in the way we understand it. For this analysis, we will describe concepts such as the unconscious, consciousness, affect, interpretation, identification, and the mirror, based on Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Jacques Lacan.

Consciousness

Freud explored two theories that differed in some respects. In the first theory Topographical he considered three levels: the unconscious, the pre-conscious and consciousness, considering that the unconscious and consciousness were opposed and coexist separately;² in the second theory Mental Structure he argued that the id, the ego and the ideal-

ego, but in which in the three parts of the self the unconscious is part of the composition and not in a separate condition. For Freud,⁴ things become conscious "by connecting with the corresponding verbal images" and "these verbal images are memory-residues; they are at once perceptions, and like all memories residues, they can become conscious again." So, it is essential, to him, to use the word to make unconscious contents become conscious.

Jung explains the unconscious by emphasizing symbolism. Concerning consciousness, he refers to the circumstance and potential in which the ego has a certain perception of the contents or to become them explicit. Otherwise, the contents are directed or located in the unconscious, so their perception only occurs at a level of inference through symbolic interpretation.

Lacan argues that consciousness is an illusion; that is, it is not a condition of knowledge but of non-knowledge. The concept of identity needs a symbolic interpretation, not knowledge verification. But symbolism is intrinsically linked to signification because it is signification that, in the process of awareness, gives consistency to a certain objectivity of the idea of the self.

Unconscious

Freud, in his "topographical theory", explains that the contents of the unconscious are the effect of repression on desires in the field of sexuality. According to his theory, the contents of the unconscious are understood in the context of sexuality in such a way that what is repressed and directed to the unconscious is associated with displeasure. Freud⁵ said that "under the influence of the ego's instinct of self-preservation, the pleasure principle is replaced by the reality principle".³ However, in his theory of the "structure of the mind", Freud considers that there is an unconscious part at every level of the mind, and even if these contents are glimpsed, there will always be a certain distortion due to the effect of the ego and superego. That's to say that under no one's circumstances, it becomes conscious in the same way as it was directed towards the unconscious. In this second version, Freud⁶ considers the Id, the Ego, and the Ego-Ideal, stating the following ideas:

- The ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it. But the repressed merges into the id as well and is simply a part of it. The repressed is only cut off sharply from the ego by the resistance of repression; it can communicate with the ego through the id. (14)
- The ego has the task of bringing the influence to the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies, and endeavours to substitute the reality principle for the pleasure principle which reigns supreme in the id. (15)
- The ego-ideal is the heir of the Oedipus complex, and thus, it is also the expression of the most powerful impulses and most important vicissitudes experienced by the libido in the id. (28)

Carl Jung understands that what is in the unconscious are contents that have lost the energy with which they could exist in consciousness. He explains that this may happen because it can't be the object of cognition, so, due to the lack of strength, it passes into certain oblivion, meaning it has gone into an immersed plane

²We have two kinds of unconscious – that which is latent but capable of becoming conscious and that which is repressed and not capable of becoming conscious in the ordinary way. (...) That which is latent, and only unconscious in the descriptive and not in the dynamic sense, we call preconscious; the term unconscious we reserve for the dynamically unconscious repressed so that we now have three terms, conscious (Cs), Preconscious (Pcs), and unconscious (Ucs), which are no longer purely descriptive in sense." (Freud 2022: 3).

³The former are then split off from this unity by the process of repression, held back at lower levels of physical development and cut off, to begin with, from the possibility of satisfaction. If they succeed subsequently, as can so easily happen with repressed sexual instincts, in struggling through, by roundabout paths, to a direct or to a substitutive satisfaction, that event, which would in other cases have been an opportunity for pleasure, is felt by the ego as displeasure." (Freud 2020: 4).

as if it were hibernating. Jung⁷ considers two kinds of unconscious: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious. He argues that the collective unconscious contents are the ones that have the more decisive struggles of influence within the "I". Jung⁸ named the unconscious contents shadow, the anima and the animus. He argues that the ones more easily accessible by the experience are the shadow's contents, which are mainly on the personal unconscious, which are the repressed negative and positive qualities all of them are the result of a personal ethical attitude, that's to say that they are what each subject doesn't want to show to the others because doesn't accept it or has shame on it in his own.

Lacan distances himself from the idea that the unconscious is primordial and instinctual. But beyond this condition, he states that the unconscious is the effect of the discourse/speech of the other. In other words, it is not a discourse caused by self-repression but by interpretation under the censorious connotation of the other's discourse about the self.

Affection

Affect is closely linked to both the conscious and the unconscious. We can understand that the unconscious is its source, and consciousness is the filter, enhancing or inverting how it manifests internally and externally.

For Freud, affect is necessary for the subject to resolve unresolved and oppressed issues in the unconscious, which were driven there because of the force of unpleasure. In Freud's statement, sexual pulsion manifests through the affection of anguish.⁹ Freud said that "one pulsion can't ever become consciousness object only the idea that represents the pulsion can" note that he refers to the sexual pulsion and "if the pulsion hadn't a link with the idea or if it couldn't be manifested as an affective state, one couldn't know anything about it" which Freud explains, adopting the idea that there is unpleasure when there is an increase in the quantity of excitation and of pleasure to a diminution.⁵ But the point is that Freud⁹ argues that "the affection remains as it is, in its whole or part; or it is transformed in anguish; or it is suppressed, i.e., it is avoided to develop itself."

Jung⁸ advocates that affect is a kind of organic, non-deliberate distension; it is a mix of sensation, emotion and feeling, differing from the first because a value judgment causes it; it differs from emotion because it is not triggered by an unconscious maladaptation but by an adaptation or maladaptation under the effect of conscious judgment; it differs from feeling because it is an organic manifestation, unlike feeling, which involves a certain conscious-unconscious harmony in which the organism does not necessarily have expression.

Lacan differs from Freud and Jung in considering the intellect and affection sides of the same coin. In other words, they coexist dialectically. Therefore, language is not opposed to affection, just as cognition streamlined at the level of consciousness is not opposed to unconsciously generated drives on the contrary, they complement each other in a dialectical sense. Lacan⁹ states that the quality of affection is "the meaningfulness attached to the repressed pulsions," thus, it has a close relationship, or dependence, on the language with which we structure its intellectual meaning.

Identification and mirror

In the field of subjectivity, we aren't able to know ourselves if we can't have relationships with other people's self. But as the notion of the self is subjective, the process of relationship and the awareness of each other implies the identification phenomena, and in this, the other is like a mirror where we "see" our self, i.e., a mix between my

inner self and the inner self of the other. The identification process spontaneously happens by interpreting what is outside us, whether through a projection or an introjection. It is like the "Other" works like a mirror that makes out the image of ourselves that, we think, is the image of that "Other", but in fact, the image "is 'inside' us" whether it is in an accessible memory or unconscious memory.

In the psychoanalytic theory sense, a (other) person can be a mirror to us, but, based on Elkins¹ theory, it may also be a space or an object. As Elkins¹ said, "In particular, vision helps us to know what we are like: we watch versions of ourselves in people and objects, and by attending to them, we adjust our sense of what we are." Elkins¹ developed his statement, arguing that "there is no such thing as a pure self or a pure object apart from that self"; more than that, it "is only a consequence of an idea we recognize every day when we say a person or an image is 'inside' us or that we are 'lost' in a scene or a memory."

Therefore, we may suggest that the world around us is like a mirror which reflects our inner self-concept. This occurs due to an empathic phenomenon, in which our relationship by identification with external elements awakens our unconscious mind the hidden part of our identity. If this experience makes us uncomfortable, it usually means we don't like a particular characteristic previously hidden in our unconscious, what Jung named shadow. We suppressed it because we were ashamed. This characteristic becomes linked to our consciousness and faces our ego, which judges everything we do or think. The person, object, or space we project onto becomes the interface by which we manage the identification of our inner idea of good or bad things. Thus, we see ourselves in those things we make identification and they reflect our self-concept our identity like a mirror, making it possible to have a relationship with our shadow where it is there not the identity but the real self. Then, if, for instance, the thing, as a mirror, stares back at us with a negative reflection, that means that we have a negative self-concept hidden in the shadow. We tend to attribute this negativity to the external object, space, or person, but it is born inside us.

Consciousness by experiencing spaces

Consciousness is not a "thing" that occupies the space of ideas; it is not the set of ideas in our mental space. Instead, it is the potential of the human being to make sense of elementary ideas and to amplify understanding of all of them or to expand the space of ideas in a broad sense.

Consciousness is the potentiality to understand ideas generated within the self, but it depends on the mechanisms of cognition and the intelligence with which they are streamlined and explained. We can become aware of elementary ideas (sensations, emotions, affections and feelings), but they can be elaborated, becoming more complex and abstract to the extent that consciousness is broadened through experience, the exercise of cognition and the application of intelligence the knowledge building.

Self-awareness doesn't depend only on intelligence or cognition; more than that, it depends on how we get in touch with our feelings during cognitive development. This reality becomes infinite when it gets within the space of imagery, whose source is the experience of unconscious giving energy to conscious reality and that only grows when our mind space has more positive affections with the inner and external spaces.

Our inner space of ideas can expand when we have a more profound experience with the unconscious, when the potential of inaccessible space is freed from the restrictions of rational judgments, and in other words, when its energy expands as an inevitable spatial

reality, even when named an unreality. The space of the unconscious is not a reality circumscribed by limits; it is the hidden reality, the space-energy, where there is no determined order, but rather an imminence of its indeterminate expansion; the energy retained in it may empower consciousness, energizing it and stimulating it to expand in his relationship with the visible reality. Consequently, we can have a better ability to know the external world and the internal world, and our concept of identity too: whenever conscious reason makes room for the irrationality of the unconscious, creating the conditions for dialectic between both realities whenever reason allows the source of its (irrational) energy to connect with it.

The space of ideas has no a priori limits. However, a rationalized way of reacting (to the elementary ideas generated in it) can limit the space of ideas, establishing a perimeter with which the subjectivity and irrationality of the unconscious will be prevented from manifesting confining the space by the limits of objectivity and logic. Rational thinking is the walls that avoid or determine our movements, giving us no chance to move to wherever or how we wish to, i.e., avoiding the free being.

On this basis, when we intervene in a space, in its order and the objects situated therein, if it causes strangeness, discomfort or questions are triggered, what may happen is that the reason becomes incompatible with the manifestation of the unconscious when in our biographical history critical judgment had created preconceptions. Therefore, it is necessary to awaken the unconscious, avoiding censoring it with critical judgments or imposing preconceptions on it, which could be a way of dynamizing permanent ideas, making them impermanent. To this extent, there would be room to generate ideas and concepts differently, while at the same time, the space of ideas becomes flexible, susceptible and permeable to the updating of the understanding of the external world and the internal world.

Note that the "strangeness and discomfort" are not signs of what we don't like in the external world but what we do not like in our inner world, our unconscious, which comes out because the external world made it awaken. And that is not bad; it is good because we can meet inner realities that were sleeping and perhaps causing us bad dreams, even when awake, without perceiving its source. That's why it is helpful to experience the psyche's unordered caused by the external pre-ordered world (the space, the objects, and people) to experiment with another inner order, a more genuine order.

The self-space of self and the physical space non-self

About the idea of physical space, making an analogy with mental space, we adopt the main thought of the author Decropt.¹⁰ He describes mental space as an internal reality where we generate all ideas (objective and subjective). We may think of our "I" as the space where multiple ideas about the world are generated; with those, we construct the idea of the vision of the external world and the internal world, that is, of the objective reality and our subjective inner self.

With the development of our inner idea space through the relationship with the surrounding space, following Decropt's thinking, it is possible to harmonize with (our) Nature when we experience the impermanent condition of ideas in our mind that is analogous to the impermanence of natural phenomena in the world, we live in. Like the Nature phenomena, ideas change, move and can become something else. That's to say that they are constantly changing, adapting, metamorphosing, updating and interrelating. Thus, their dynamics allow for the natural restructuring of thought and, consequently, a reordering/reorganizing (internal) space, where a sort of identity

is designed (of the architect, the user, the spectator, the space, the subject).

The idea space of thoughts, emotions, sensations and perceptions has no measure.¹⁰ This means that their presence will never exhaust the internal space they occupy.⁴ We struggle to develop science-based knowledge that works based on measuring all the realities. But science can not yet work through the immeasurable realities, such as the "subject" an irrefutable reality whose only measurable element is the duration of being alive. Then, if we can't put limits on our "I" and don't know which is its end. We can't also affirm that it is possible to explain objectively what our identity is, that's to say, what the unlimited self is compared to the limited non-self.

As far as Lacan is concerned, identity does not coincide with a condition of limited individual consciousness. Lacan understands that, instead of this uniqueness, identity is achieved through the unlimited sum of identifications so that self-consciousness broadens as the subject becomes aware of other identities. We must have in mind also that "ego"⁵ and "ideal ego"⁶ do not define our true identity,¹¹ but instead create a false idea of who we are and drive us under the¹² *sinthome*.⁷

The self is a mixture of effects caused by our relationship with the external world on our mind and body. We are our body and consciousness, the house where we give life to the "I", where the "I" and the world get together as a unique reality our home. The phenomenon of self-consciousness is a process by which we are aware that our self exists if we know what the external world is about. So, the identity is not the self; it is the non-self; ⁸it is the awareness of the

⁴Your idea space consists of your thoughts, emotions, sensations, perceptions, and the empty set, or nothingness. Your idea space is unique to you, uncountably deep, has zero measure and is located at the center of your observable universe. Uncountable means it is impossible to count all your thoughts, emotions, sensations, and perceptions. In other words, your idea space is impermanent or in a constant state of flux. Put plainly, notice an idea, and another idea appears." (Decropt 2001: 37).

⁵The ego is a construction which is formed by identification with the specular image in the "mirrorstage. It is thus the place where the subject becomes alienated from himself, transforming himself into his counterpart. This alienation on which the ego is based is structurally similar to paranoia, which is why Lacan writes that the ego has a paranoid structure. The ego is thus an imaginary formation, as opposed to the subject, which is a product of the symbolic. (...) The ego is structured like a symptom: 'The ego is structured exactly like a symptom. At the heart of the subject, it is only a privileged symptom, the human symptom *par excellence*, the mental illness of man'." (Cf. Ego. In Evans 2006: 52).

⁶The ideal ego, on the other hand, originates in the specular image of the mirror stage; it is a promise of future synthesis towards which the ego tends, the illusion of unity on which the ego is built. The ideal ego always accompanies the ego, as an ever-present attempt to regain the omnipotence of the preoedipal dual relation. Though formed in primary identification, the ideal ego continues to play a role as the source of all secondary identifications." (Cf. Ego-ideal. In Evans 2006: 53).

⁷The 1975–6 seminar extends the theory of the Borromean knot, which in the previous seminar had been proposed as the essential structure of the subject, by adding the *sinthome* as a fourth ring to the triad of the real, the symbolic and the imaginary, tying together a knot which constantly threatens to come undone. This knot is not offered as a model but as a rigorously non- metaphorical description of a topology 'before which the imagination fails' (...). Since meaning (*sens*) is already figured within the knot, at the intersection of the symbolic and the imaginary, it follows that the function of the *sinthome*—intervening to knot together real, symbolic and imaginary—is inevitably beyond meaning." (Cf. *Sinthome*. In Evans 2006: 191).

⁸As Alan Watts said, 'The true Self is Non-Self'. In other words, your true Self is a combination of both these Selves, the combination of the science of objects and the science of the first person. Overall, your non-Self is the unification of the science of objects, things we can measure, and the science of the first person, things with zero measure." (Decropt 2001: 124).

external world that causes our self-knowledge as a part of the world. The identity is done by identifying the external world; the self is what we are with our conscious and unconscious realities, it is behind the idea of self-identity, and is the basis of what we do identifications; the "I" is what we are without any identification, is the will and the power to expand the self, through identifications but to be unique.

In this analysis phase, it is essential to emphasize the role of symbolic meanings. We have a process that is not genuinely instinctive but is also not aware: symbolic thinking or, better, the interpretation and the use of the poetic sense and the metaphors. This approach is common in psychoanalysis theories. The arts and poetic way of thinking,¹³ whether expressed through art or giving a symbolic meaning to a space or architectural design,⁹ can help us deal with our inner self by connecting our "I" with real, symbolic, and imaginary senses. Actually, this can lead to a more profound understanding of our inner selves, distinguishing between our and other identities. It is helpful to understand the present arguing about how the experience with space may reveal about ourselves, our identity, and our "I".

The "I" and the water

Let's think of a glass of water: water acquires (another) "identity", i.e., a new flavour when mixed with other substances. We may wonder if we were born like our soul, for analogy, was "water"? Had Rousseau right when he argued that we are born as a blank slate as the water that is converted into our identity during our relationship with the world becoming a non-pure substance?

Consciousness is our ability to evaporate water, even if we freeze it through rational cognition. But the wide consciousness is possible only by the "temperature" variation from the irrationality of sensations, emotions and the unconscious. We can freeze the "water" (all that is flowing in our "I" in the consciousness and in the unconscious), build a frozen castle structuring the knowledge and then unfreeze it and know how it evaporates, realizing how immense it is. We can build the "castle" of knowledge, but then we have to transform it into its imagery of evaporation.

If we melt a glass of frozen water to mix lemon juice into it, giving it a different flavour, we, consequently, will enrich its condition thus creating circumstances in us for a richer reality. In other words, ice by analogy with permanent ideas when it thaws (it no longer has a permanent condition), it turns into water, which is receptive to mixing other liquids (by analogy, other identities) to obtain a different liquid that is, with a different identity. In the spite of this, when you add sugar to your drink, you are trying to improve the "aesthetics", but you are hiding the identity of your drink as well. The acid taste is strange to you; the sugar is not. The sugar tends to turn to a unique taste, an unreferenced reality, without identity: the sweet flavour. On the contrary, each acid taste has a different "identity", so the more different "identities" you know, the much more you know about yourself because your organism had to adapt to several different objects, and, as Damásio² says, the consciousness happens since how our organism be modified in the sensible experience of adapting to the (different) objects.

The space of the author's mind one more time, in analogy to water when structured by permanent ideas frozen restricts the dynamics of the phenomenon of awareness because you have no possibility of experiencing different senses, mixing with different identities,

⁹Objects become symbolic when they point beyond themselves, reminding us of particular people, values, ideas, places or events. Hence, when we look around a room that we have made our own, we have a sense of who we are and where we have come from because we can take a mental check on the symbols within our field of vision.(Thomson 2021: 168).

and adapting to them, as to have your organism modified and your consciousness triggered. However, when the mind becomes malleable (not frozen) through creativity and sensitivity, orienting itself in an impermanent direction thawing out, becoming permeable and mixing with other contents/substances/ideas (by association with other liquids), the transformation of thought and knowledge takes place including about thought/knowledge about oneself and the idea/concept of the identity of oneself and the work.

More than our soul,¹⁴ we may wonder if our "I"¹⁰ is like "water", where we are doing several mixtures with different identities/substances and a wide range of ideas/flavours from the internal and external worlds. More than our soul, we may wonder if our "I" is like "water", where we are doing several mixtures with different identities/substances and a wide range of ideas/flavours from the internal and external worlds. May we state, therefore, that the essence of our "I" is like the water, and our identity results from mixing elements that become it with particular characteristics and a unique identity, a different flavour? But, if so, the different flavour our identity is not our "I"; it is the result of the union between our self (the water) and the non-self (the substances that are added to the water) something similar to what Decropt stated. If we agree with this hypothesis, our inner space (the water) is being filled with external identities (savories of other substances), information, and objective data (such as the idea of other identities). If so, how do we achieve an empty space, free from ideas of the external world, including other identities, to build our genuine identity or, better to say, to feel our self, our essence (the water without anything else, without any other substance added)?

On the other hand, we may suggest that sensations, emotions, and affections are like water that may be boiling or at a natural temperature. When we give those meanings, explanations, and definitions, the space fills with ideas, thoughts, memories, and objects their subjective and flowing reality becomes objective and inert and turns from the steam reality to a structured condition, like the identity. With too many objective thoughts and explanations, perhaps it becomes frozen, like the personality. If all the emotions become free, they become too warm and "boiled". If we do not keep it frozen or simmering, it becomes more harmonized with the natural external ambience, having a better balance in the internal nature. So, as metaphorical conceptual thinking, the "ideas" occupy our inner space on different levels: in the unconsciousness if more subjective, irrational and profound where tend to a boiled reality; in the consciousness if objective, rational and structured where tend to a frozen reality.

The identity as a home, the personality as the house and the "I" as its owner

Let's think over another analogy. The personality is the house filled with the reality of non-self. It becomes a self, a home, when the "I" adjusts the non-self to his inner need and sensibility. So, the "I" is an architect who designs the house with a particular personality; on

¹⁰Jacques Lacan introduced the concept of 'I' with the mirror stage (...), in opposition not to the Freudian ego but to the philosophy derived from the Cartesian cogito. The mirror stage constitutes an identification; namely, the transformation that occurs in a subject when he assumes an image as his own. This stage constitutes a fundamental identification that precedes the moment when the subject identifies with others through the mediation of language. It comprises several phases: in the first, the child reacts joyfully to the image but identifies it as belonging to another; in the second, he perceives its imaginary nature and seeks the other behind the mirror; in the third, the child recognizes the image as his own. (...) Therefore the 'I' simultaneously is alienated in this image, because it is always external to it, and finds stability, if not a permanence, there. (...) In a second temporal phase, the subject is mediated by language, thereby returning to the unconscious everything that does not pass into discourse." (Cf. "I". In Mijolla 2005: 775).

the other hand, the "I" is the owner who fills the house. The "house" (the personality) will only become a "home" (a self) when the owner (the "I") adapts the house to his profound criteria.

The architect (one "I") can't impose himself on the design of a house with his personality; the client (another "I") has the right to contribute with his personality to the design. That's to say that the house needs to have a part of the owner's personality to become his home (where the self achieves conditions to feel free). That's why the house has to be the result of the union between the "I" of the architect and the "I" of the clients, who will occupy the house (the space of ideas, the empty space) with their thoughts, sensations, wishes, objects, etc., getting them all together with the harmony the empty space of the house becoming it in a home.

Then, our "I", better than the metaphor of water, is the owner of the house the personality and is the power and the will with which the house becomes his home the self. Thus, the idea of "I" is not the same as identity, or what occupies the space of our mind; it is the will and the power to achieve a particular "home" the self, if is close to his genuine "I", or the identity, if opted identifications putting aside his true "I".

Therefore, the true "I" doesn't occupy any space because it is the space not the designed space, but the soul of the space: all the willing, the fears, the worries, the knowledge with what the self (that is not measurable) develops its adaptation to the non-self (that is measurable). And, so, what the "I" (of the architect and the owner) describes as being his identity is what he can be aware of and states as the difference of others, that is, not the self (his home) but the discourse about it, about what remains of the self's developing, with the limits of his personality (the "house").

Actually, our "I" only knows himself when he works on the house (when he builds a personality). The "I" is not understandable without explanations, rational ideas, identifications, filling the house with objects, objectives and other identities, and without developing all the efforts to achieve what he guesses is the self (the home). But, at a certain moment of our life, we need to empty the "house" and be aware of our true "home" our proper "I" without needing non-self elements.¹¹ It is like we are trying to find the best taste for a drink or the best home, adding all the things that come to our mind and think we know a new thing, and then we make all the efforts to distil it to discover the reality that was already there since the beginning, and that was recurrent and artificially metamorphosed.

According to some personalities, this emptiness without "objects" in Decroix's view, the ideas from the outside is the condition for the total existence of our inner self. Which begs the question: Does self-consciousness require emptiness? That's to say, as we were arguing, does the "I" need to empty the house, to get pure water, to feel a real owner of his "home", avoiding the idea that the objects/substances/ideas are the owners of his house? If so, would the awareness of the outside be a barrier to self-consciousness, while the outside would consist of objects extrinsic to the self? The "I" is only aware of himself when he fills a house, adapting his will, fears, and knowledge to the previous house's design. He will have self-consciousness when experimenting with the non-self. Anyway, it is not stated here that we have to develop only minimalist architecture.

¹¹In meditation, we consider nothingness a space with total freedom to think. In empty space, no breathing or idea of identity, judgments, values or hierarchies exists. With meditation, you empty the space of the ideas that occupy it, but you don't stop being yourself because the empty space is not just a "house" but also constitutes the self – the home to you as both the host and the guest.

Designing a unique objective space from a subjective space

Based on what has been analyzed, the challenge to an architect is to express his identity (and explore his thoughts and identity) by designing a unique element, i.e., an element with identity. But that is not enough, it is necessary to have a place for the owner's or user's personality, to the extent that they could make the designed space their special space (for example, their home), so that it would obtain an identity as a projection of the user's or owner's identity, and, with all this achieved, in the sense that the user could create better conditions for reuniting with their own identity. It will be helpful to think of spaces, structures, orderings or forms that invert certain imprisonment to the ideal of "I" a fake identity or the need to reinforce or to impose the idea of identity, or, in other words, the permanent idea of identity or the personality of the author. In a word, there are needed openings to reformulate the concept of identity, particularly the architect's, in a clearer-sighted way, creating circumstances for the user to have experiences that reinforce his "I".

Therefore, we can reflect on the possibility of creating circumstances in which we experience the impermanent condition of thoughts, emotions, sensations and identity: where the "water" the "I" may get warmer, distilled, and able to be felt in its essence. Then, the space previously designed as a personality the house design might work as a site where the "I" of the user can feel free to develop his self as well his home without a permanent order being allowed to him to metamorphose the idea of identity the idea of home: sometimes questioning the personality (house), changing himself, his self (his home), achieving a more expansive consciousness and becoming a true "I" (the owner) and get a most authentic idea of his identity (what he describes his special home or, in general, space).

Architects (the "I") can opt for either "emptiness" (minimalist) or "totality" (baroque) in a given space so that the user (another "I") can experience stimuli or their absence on an external level, triggering an internal experience with which they awaken their sense of self, not only in the movement of sensations (on the level of the senses) but also when they are incited to question themselves when confronted with strangeness, i.e. external non-being, on the level of objective and subjective thoughts. In a word, it is possible - with total elements or not - for the user (the owner, the "I") to question whether the space (the house) and its identity, i.e., the special design is well converted into a particular house, suitable for the owner, the "I".

As we saw before, the space of ideas is the "place" where we have and generate ideas and is the space of our "I". The "house" is the personality where we develop our home (the identity), adapting it to our self, behind what, there is the "I". The results of how we are interconnected or not, dependent or not, related or not, with our genuine "I".

The space's breadth, the whole space where the "I" expands, makes possible the phenomenon of the "I" consciousness, through which we can understand information and external effects/objects in the transformation of our organism, our thinking and our knowledge, and our idea of our identity. What can limit this space are not feelings, emotions or sensations but the strength of the thoughts that keep us trapped in permanent ideas (including the idea we have about our identity) and in the dependence on the non-self. These are entropic thoughts, i.e., anything that goes against pro-action and traps us in the present or the past (the personal or the social heritage) these are excessive rational thoughts. However, entropy is not necessarily the external world (the house) but how we think of it: how we are not able to become it in a home, i.e., close to our genuine "I".

As our way of thinking has a significant influence from what society imposes on us, we have to find our real personal way of thinking, having free emotions and feelings having the possible balance between rationality and irrationality, between our "I" and the will of the pre-existing world. That is the challenge for an architect to design spaces, balancing these two tendencies the preexisting objective factors and the subjective factors of each one and achieving a space where the user may experience his deep self, or, at least, in which he doesn't feel constrained on his free will of being a genuine "I".

Even though architecture rationalizes space, limiting it in a functionalist way, this functionalism is not restricted to an author's reason and the objective solutions he has to present. The author's subjectivity, his sensitivity, and his genuine "I" affect the thought process when he projects his identity into the result, which is built through experiences in which permanent ideas become impermanent (because this is forced by the need to adapt to changing personal or non-personal circumstances).

In the context of the subjective and objective experience within a space, we have relationships between, for example, matter and energy, shadow and light, concern and courage, and reason and emotion, and, so, being extrapolated to the conception and experience of architecture with closed or open space, ample or small space; functional or spiritual space. Faced with these apparent different realities, it is necessary to study the influence of aesthetics (or sensitivity in a broad sense) on the different types of space; the influence of rationality (and sensibility), particularly in (in) determining organization, routes, accessibility, contact with the outside, horizontality, or verticality.

In the present article, we tried to highlight that physical space can increase mental space if we are subjectively and sensibly involved with it. So, we may wonder what could occupy a physical space that contributes to making our mental space unlimited, the space of ideas, the awareness of our "I". In other words, what spaces and objects could help us achieve a more expansive internal space, i.e., reverse the tendency to limit it? For instance, what aesthetic aspects could allow us to expand our space of ideas? Is there a way of approaching a space that by transforming the permanence of ideas (for example, of order or disorder) into impermanence allows us to restructure previous ideas, such as prejudices and, thus, become better able to transform and enrich our identity, whenever we become susceptible to other ideas and identities with their personalities? This is the challenge for those who have to design humanized spaces.

Thus, remaining some questions about how to improve and have more potential to multiply if we empty ourselves of previous ideals namely, forgetting the ideas of our identity, our judgments and principles consequently providing ourselves with an internal space free of external "objects", making our consciousness more capable: can we presuppose that the personality condition the space of ideas excessively, limiting, through permanence, greater insight into the idea of our identity? How can we conceive of an external (physical) space that contributes to amplifying the internal (mental/psychic) space becoming the personality flexible, not being imprisoned by our self-identity, and having a closer relationship with our "I" and the "I" of the others?

To do so, we may analyze the following table, where some space characteristics that may contribute to having a more profound sensation of inner self are proposed. These characteristics are supposed to get a flow and bigger inner space without external elements that could condition it.

All the conditions mentioned in Table 1 have a symbolic meaning. That's to say that the physical circumstances, even different from the psychical circumstances, work similarly on the inner self, the ideas space, and the subjective space. To understand this statement, it is essential to apply Jung's identification conceptions: projection and introjection.¹² Both are a way to reinforce our affections, whether it is, respectively, by dissimulation or assimilation.

The space where we are is like a mirror. Your relationship with the objective space is the way through which you relate with a mirror, whose reflection increases and improves our subjective space, as it is an interface between our inner objective reality and our inner subjective reality. If you strongly identify with the objective space with which you have a relationship, you increase your relation on the subjective level, becoming the objective space in a subjective space, i.e., "your space":

- 1) "Free contact with nature" allows the person to experience the source of his reality, as he is part of nature. Nature is the reflection of our nature. If we link with it, we link with ourselves or our source.
- 2) "Wide vision of contact with the sky" gives us the notion of infinitude, having the sensation of the infinite inner space. When we realize the objective space has no limit, it may work as a mirror where we see our inner space as the reflection with no limits.
- 3) "Seeing the sun" makes us realize that we have light to see the world; at the same time, we feel that our inner shadow may turn to light. As if the shadow, in Jung's conception,¹³ becoming the opposite, the happiness of being ourselves, as we truly are. However, sometimes we are invaded with too much information from the exterior, and that's when you search for darkness, to have only the information from your inner self. Too much light makes us focus on a wide external world, and darkness may lead us to be able to focus on the internal world.
- 4) "Personal changing available" is a condition of being free to change the external world and simultaneously winning the capability to change your internal world. That's to say that the pre-existing order is not imposed on you because you can change it. That "opportunity" is how you develop your psyche through the physique reality changing.
- 5) "To choose your way as you feel like" is about how you walk through and the freedom of choosing how you wish to get something not the hallways, but the way of thinking and the feeling of freedom.
- 6) "Moving as you want" makes you move your psyche because the physical moving increases it, i.e., if you move as you wish, you will feel that there aren't barriers to living where you are. You may move with speed, slowly, with continuity, jumping in the same way, you may when thinking and feeling.

¹²INTROJECTION. Psychologically speaking, introjection is a process of assimilation (q.v.), while projection is a process of dissimulation. Introjection is an assimilation of object to subject, projection a dissimulation of object from subject through the expulsion of a subjective content into the object (v. Projection, active). Introjection expulsion of a subjective content into the object (v. Projection, active). Introjection is a process of extraversion (q.v.), since assimilation to the object requires empathy (q.v.) and an investment of the object with libido (q.v.). A passive and an active introjection may be distinguished: transference phenomena in the treatment of the neuroses belong to the former category and, in general, all cases where the object exercises a compelling influence on the subject, while empathy as a process of adaptation belongs to the latter category." (Jun 2017: 415).

¹³The inner space where you have hidden, what we don't like and having shame in ourselves.

- 7) With the condition of "no objects", we mean you are alone with yourself, without artificial elements, where the subjects are only subjects; where there isn't objective information, whether it is perceptual, material, declarative or rational; where there is only subjective information: emotions, feelings, affections, sensations where these may manifest with total freedom.
 - 8) If you are in a "comfortable temperature", you feel there are no obstacles to your survival. There is such equilibrium that you have to be worried about the body equilibrium and, so, the mind equilibrium.
 - 9) Having "no noising" leads you to focus on what you have to. If there is noise, you lose energy in information you don't like. On the contrary, if you can choose "the sound you wish", you can have a harmony between subjective and internal information and objective and external information. The same thing happens when you choose "the colour you like".
 - 10) Your psyche order is impermanent, not only your emotions and feelings but also the way you think. If there is the "possibility to change the organization walls", you may change, as analogy and identification, the "walls" that close or organize your thoughts and feelings.
 - 11) So, to achieve these conditions, it is necessary that "your space" is "designed under your opinion" as you are the main user that's what happens with your subjective and inner space. In the case of an objective space design, you have to develop a relationship with the objective ideas space of the architect, trying it to become your inner space, achieving a more signification subjective space.
- The objective ideas space of both becomes a common subjective feelings space.
- 12) If we might design our space, we wouldn't desire to struggle with limiting space, so we would prefer "the wide or the tall space" because of its association with the vast inner space.
 - 13) What is essential is not only the space where you are within but also where the space is situated and what surrounds it. If you have the same information surrounding you, you may feel the world is always the same; consequently, you would have no stimuli to change your inner space. That's why travelling is a way of feeling free and a new person. So, the ideal circumstance could be, for instance, having the possibility to change the site where you work or live and then to have your feelings nurtured with different external stimuli.
 - 14) When an architect proposes a building design, he does it based on his experience and his perceptions of the user's experience. However, that is about probabilities. Perhaps in a few years, we will be able to have a virtual space experience, whether the space, the light, the atmosphere, etc. But actually, that wouldn't be sufficient for any user or several users; it would be helpful to have "a long discussion with the architect" to make it possible to adjust his ideas to yours in order to develop identification with each other.
 - 15) Even if you have a built space, it should be made with modules or flexible materials that allow you to change the space you are using, i.e., your space; as such, in your inner space, changes wouldn't be only the order of things but also a more profound change, like it may have a new identity, your true self: your "I".

Table 1 Some space characteristics that may contribute to having a more profound sensation of inner self are proposed

| Variables adjusted to the conditions of encounter with oneself at an affective, introspective and comfort level | | Objective space | | | Subjective space | | |
|---|---|-----------------|---------|-----------|------------------|-------------|------------|
| | | Factory | Storage | Bath room | Sacred space | Dining room | Your space |
| The worst and almost impossible | 0 | | | | | | |
| Possible but unusual | 1 | | | | | | |
| Good but conditioned | 2 | | | | | | |
| The best | 3 | | | | | | |
| Free contact with nature | | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Wide vision of contact with the sky | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Seeing the sun | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| The Darkness | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Personal changing available | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| To choose your way as you feel like | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Moving as you want | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| No objects | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Comfortable temperature | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| No noising | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| The sound you wish | | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| The color you like | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Possibility to change the organization walls | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| The design under the opinion of the user | | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| The wide or the tall space | | 3 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Change the site of the space whenever you need | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Having a virtual 5D experience before building the space | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| A long discussing between the architect and the client or the users | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Metaphors of the space as such, the users like | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Feel good alone | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | | Factory | Storage | Bathroom | Sacred space | Dining room | Your space |

All the conditions mentioned should improve “how good you feel alone”, having the possibility to do meditation, introspection, spiritual experiences, not having restlessness and feeling that there are no threats from outside, whether the physical elements or the physical factors. That’s to say that we search for a subjective space through the objective space by nurturing the affections about the external world and, consequently, with our internal world increasing its potentiality to get together with other subjective spaces the others “I”.

Conclusion

This analysis developed the idea of the importance of a subjective experience with the external world but focusing on the relationship with the architectural space. It was argued that it is helpful for people to have a sensible experience with the physical space to amplify their mental space.

We intended to clarify more than the question of affective balance but also consciousness. It was, moreover, to realize the importance of awakening the unconscious and making it balanced with the consciousness.

Even though we may introspect about our experience with a particular space, we do not have to explain our feelings but only express them, for instance, using metaphoric and symbolic discourse because it is the better way not to be a prisoner of rationality and its censures in the field of the strict sense of logic. That’s why the present text underlined the need to think about the subjective experience of an architect, as he does in designing, for example, any religious building - exploring the symbolic meanings.

Following the goal of having a more profound relationship with ourselves, whether it happens when we design a space or experiment with it, this reflection highlighted the importance of feeling free to have better conditions with which our identity could be clarified. That’s to say that there is a challenge to design spaces where the users may have experiences with which the unconscious can contact the consciousness and, therefore, the hidden part of the “I” can awake and complete the conscious part that we name descriptive identity and becoming possible that the user gets closer to the real self the wide potential identity.

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Conflicts of interest

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