

A Conversation

Philosopher S: The new does not arrive from some other place, but is produced from the very matter of the world, after all what else is there? And where else can new stuff come from? The new involves a recombination - a scrambling - of already existing elements, already understood codes, in and of the world. The new would then be a repetition, but with difference - a new dice throw. But what *is* this difference? Or, what else is needed to produce the new?

Philosopher Q: What is needed is what lies close at hand. All is already Readymade. Colours from a palette, words that are always already formed. Idiosyncratic fragments of a life led. All is then carefully arranged, framed for our consideration. Laid on a table, pinned to a wall, the work is isolated from the world, but is always to be read within a larger sequence, within a larger space. The air in the room; the noise from the street. A whole atmospherics plays its part. A focus on the smallest detail coupled with the broadest possible awareness of the widest possible context. A simple but complex practice.

Philosopher S: There is a certain depth to be sounded. A move beyond the horizontal plane of matter - or simply the 'what is' - to another realm. The new involves a certain access to a certain something outside of the present plane of existence. Something that is not immediately accessible or apparent to the human configuration in its usual state. What then is the nature of this other place from which something new and different can, at last, emerge?

Philosopher Q: Something different is certainly happening here; this is a dance to a different tune in which the slightest alterations would seem to suffice. A brushstroke and an image, a typewriter and a sentence. Fragments of pictures, edges of texts. A certain strange intimacy with the already existent. A low-tech-craft-Do-it-Yourself aesthetic. But this is not all. This is not just a jumble, a mix; something else is occurring here. After all, if there's no soul then what's the point? Anything pictured, anything spoken with the right feeling is sufficient. In fact, it is not the thing presented, but always the thing behind the thing that matters.

Philosopher S: This depth is on a temporal axis. It is not a place as such, but rather another time, a time that is radically at odds with the world of matter. A pure-past, a realm of pure potentiality. This potential can only be actualised through a slowness, a stillness - when a gap is opened between stimulus and response. A break in habit. The new is not a simple recombination of

matter, but involves, ultimately, a turn away from such matter to a specifically different realm. This is the motionless voyage. A drawing on a source that is located beyond things as they are. Such a return journey into this other place cannot but affect the world.

***Philosopher Q:** There is indeed a transportation of a certain kind, the staging of an altered reality. One's own languages, because they are one's own invention, will always be best to tell the story - a working out of the relevant form - although, to others, it might seem difficult, even obscure. Words and colours, the colour of words. A language for a people who do not recognise themselves in the languages of the dominant. We are presented with another possible world within this one. We are presented with signs that have been captured, recorded, from a different place, a different time.*

Philosopher S: So the new cannot simply be read about, cannot be directly accessed, but is produced through a certain orientation and intention. This new must involve practices that transform the very subject who is looking for the new, looking to make, to become, something different. Such practices will necessarily be non-scientific, introspective, expressive, performative. Such practices, from the point of view of knowledge, will look very suspect indeed involving as they do such a mutable subjective position, concerned as they are with more than the 'what is'.

***Philosopher Q:** There is nothing to understand here, nothing to interpret. Nothing to add to the sediment-of-knowledges of what went before. Subjectivity is not a vessel to be filled. This is not even a form of counter-knowledge. When something stops making sense I feel happy - suddenly a joy affect - anything is possible. I become something different, something more than I was before. Subjectivity is always this exploratory probe. Delicate? Feint? I don't think so. Harder than a hard crystal. These are joyful articles of faith, foldings in and of matter, foldings in and of sound.*

Philosopher S: It is the diagram that articulates the relation between the actual, the discursive and signifying, and the virtual, the non-discursive and asignifying. An individual - however this is thought - is the relationship between these two. Always a face towards the earth but also always a face towards the cosmos. We need to ask: what are your virtual capacities? Or, how much of the virtual is available to you? And remember it is not your virtual, but 'you' are a part of that virtual that has been actualised. This outside that is located inside is close at hand yet further away than

the most distant land. It is the 'new' element that changes the system or the subject. It is your experimental milieu, a part of yourself that is also specifically a part from yourself.

***Philosopher Q:** It is always a body that expresses these new forms and new languages, even when the work is an attitude or a state of mind. A stuttering and stammering of gesture, the foregrounding of glitches and breaks. Something happens - almost nothing - to break a world, to make a world. We are always surrounded by this murmuring and we respond with the tentative gestures of something waiting to be born. All words will be made different in their turn, colours and shapes mobilised in a different, more abstract manner, even when they picture that which already is.*

Philosopher S: There is a concept - Kairos - that names an orientation, a 'point of view', best characterised as a certain restlessness or opening out to the 'to-come'. Here the new is an attitude, not a place, and not a made thing, not even a time. We might draw it as an oblique line from the present, neither to the past nor future. Kairos is that which creates in the eternal, where the eternal becomes productive. The body is this Kairos, this actualising machine. And Kairos will name a naming at the edge of being - the calling forth of a world. Here language is creative, generative, not to do with articulating already existing knowledges, or not only this, but always about exploration, about experimentation.

***Philosopher Q:** What we are presented with is the residue of a process. Tough thinking and making. Recollections and diagrams. Sketches in word and colour of things still being formed. This is about communication and its limits. What we are offered is merely a selection of the endless possibilities, the limitless permutations. This practice will always be one of editing, of selection. The temptation is to want to play all possible combinations - to show them all and at once. The other temptation is to par it right back - to go right to the limits - an impulse to give only just what is necessary, just enough light by which to see. It is the repetition of this gesture that gives the detail its power.*

Philosopher S: Can in fact something be called forth by another method that is not a naming? Here we must consider the relationship between the thing and the name. Which comes first? It is here that philosophy finds its limits and practice becomes the measure. In the studio there might be a first name for something, an idea, but then the production of something that speaks back to the artist, says its own name: 'it's me!' Or there might be a field of things from which a name, an

organisation, gradually emerges. This has nothing to do with conscious intention. This process does not stop at the studio door but continues into the gallery and beyond.

***Philosopher Q:** These are events that have nothing to do with revolution, micro-events of a life led in practice. If these works are an event then what would fidelity to this event involve? A seeing, hearing and reading things differently? A moving through the world in a different manner, at a different speed? When it is done effectively - authentically - practice is transformative, alchemical. Base material is made precious, the mundane made magical. Language and painting can always brighten our realities. Art is always the art of nudging the world. There might indeed appear to be very little and yet it is that very little that is the micro-deviation that itself allows a certain piling up and the production of something else, something new. A more common name for this practice is love when it names, in turn, the production, and unfolding, of an other's world.*