

# Transparent Dialogues: On Complex Affective Systems (CAFFS)

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Discussing how the study of animal cognition in the ethological paradigm is producing results that show how it is possible to have a more comprehensive understanding of cognition and communication, and how an analysis of the ethological and the Batesonian understanding of cognition and behavior shows it is impossible to remove the fundamental epistemological position of the observer through a definition of information as negentropy, Søren Brier's seminal work can be seen as an attempt to bring forth a new integrative and non-reductionist perspective of the apparent paradoxes of human knowing. According to Brier, paradigms of information are crucial to our understanding of self, consciousness, communication and our relation to nature. From the perspective we present here, the idea of integration, interdependence of observer and observation in quantum mechanics, is essential to understand the continuity in communicational processes involving interdependent informational organizations. Systems that can be described as having a characteristic that couples with its adaptive qualities—affectiveness. From this perspective, that can be in dialogue with the transdisciplinary approach of Brier, they can be understood as “complex affective systems” (CAFFS)—a term coined by the author to describe and discuss certain complex adaptive systems focusing on affectiveness as the main bond between the systems' elements. Working with the idea of affectiveness opens up the possibility to relate the aspect of system's interconnectedness and the ability its elements have of nonlocal communicating, to the phenomena of quantum entanglement. The concept of a CAFFS is an attempt to encapsulate confluent perspectives around transpersonal states of consciousness focusing on the ways we affect and are affected by each other and the world around by means of interacting in a quantum (vibrational) level. Bringing these perspective to discuss the author's artistic practice in the intersections of media art and sciences, implies considering experience in terms of systems of intercreating processes, coupling with visions like the one of Allan Combs, who presents a comprehension of consciousness that incorporates dynamical systems theory and phenomenology, and where the human mind is viewed as a complex dynamic event, constantly engaged in the act of self-creation. If we take our sensory and extra-sensory abilities from a quantum perspective, nonlocal communication is to be considered as a natural phenomenon that depends on the vibrational subatomic qualities of the systems in interaction. As emergences from processes through which the author is exploring these ideas, the author's recent works embody in the systemic configuration of the “Subtle Apparatuses for Nonlocal Affectiveness” (2013–2015); solo exhibitions by the author), reflections that can be understood as incursions on the subtleties of informational processes in a quantum level. By means of the author's approach in the above mentioned series, apparatuses are not taken as external forces that operate on bodies from the outside but as material-discursive practices that are inextricable from the bodies that are produced. In this experimental project, recently exhibited in Los Angeles (2014) and Shanghai (2015), the author invites to think about humans' affective dimension from a semi-material and non-local perspective. Traveling through the touchable and the untouchable, exploring the power of observation in the creation of the cross-scale realities we inhabit, the series illustrates how, by actively integrating CAFFS, we can explore realms where we are neither waves, nor particles, or may perform both, simultaneously.

**Keywords:** complex affective systems (CAFFS), art and science, observer-observation relations in quantum mechanics, non-locality, subtle apparatuses for nonlocal affectiveness, quantum entanglement, black boxes.

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cannot in the original) see into it, and there are no limits (instead of *there are limits* in the original) to what the observer can observe.

If we “give up the boxes and work with the entire loopiness of the thing,” as suggested by Varela (1995) in the above quotation, a hypothetical, *transparent entity* can be constructed by a hypothetical, *transparent observer* as an alternative to the construct of a black box, both being elements of a *complex affective system* (CAFFS). In this case, beyond language, the conversation that is going on does not presuppose a medium, a channel; It is instantaneous and nonlocal. There is no observable input; there is no observable output. If there is something perceivable, it is the metamorphic instant’s stream itself, emerging consciousness from cross-scale perception.

Glanville continues his reflection by affirming that:

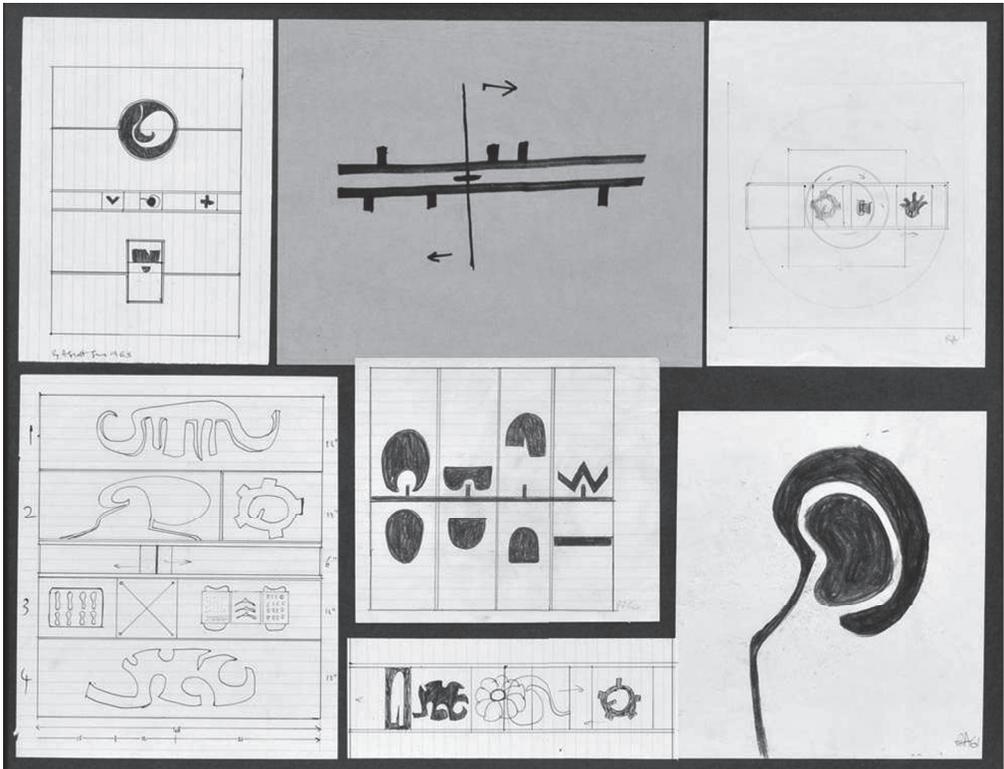
in a sense, there is no you and me, but the dance of interaction through which we come into being, you and I for me, I and you for you (Glanville, 1990). When we force the interface onto one or the other, we lose the space of interaction, and we lose our freedom and individuality: we become the automata of action/reaction, of the psychologists’ misuse of the “Black Box,” of the confusion of the as if with the as. (Glanville, 1997, p. 5)

It would be liberating if we envisage consciousness as the very emergence from the instantaneity of entangled states in our structural (despite its inherent subtlety) subatomic realm. A realm populated by vibrational entities, luminous, photonic, phantasmagoric. As touchable as our imagination; as powerful as our imagination—a cross-scale phenomenological world where we have no macroscopic segregated senses but this multifaceted perception that leads to the emergence of consciousness from quantum informational processes. Those were the introductory ideas we tried to present here and that are encapsulated in the very concept of what we mean as a complex affective system.

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