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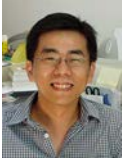
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SELF-COGNITION? SAṂGHABHADRA, ARMSTRONG, AND INTROSPECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS



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This paper at first presents Saṁghabhadra's (fifth century C.E.) core argument against reflexive self-cognition and extracts a reflective model of cognition from Saṁghabhadra's work. Second, from the perspective of this model, we aim to elaborate on D. M. Armstrong's (1926–2014) idea of introspective consciousness and so-called higher-order perception theory of consciousness. We assume that our model of consciousness is reflective, perceptual, causal and fallible, contingently private, and theory-laden. Third, to explore the potential of this reflective model, we try to bring out its implications and defend it against criticisms. Finally, following the Buddhist doctrines of non-self and dependent origination, on the one hand, we claim that there is no reflexive self-cognition and no self as subject or as object, and, on the other hand, we recognize that there is a reflective self-cognition in the conventional sense.

Inspired by [Ching Keng's talk \(2014\)](#), in which the main proposal is that to properly interpret Dignāga's (480–540 C.E.) idea of self-cognition, we must go back to the earlier context of Abhidharma tradition before Dignāga, I realize the importance of the Abhidharma tradition to the issue of self-cognition. And I am also encouraged by Zhihua Yao's pioneering book (2005), *The Buddhist Theory of Self-cognition*, which is the first book, as he said in the book cover, "to study systematically the Buddhist theory of self-cognition with an emphasis on its pre-Dignāga development."

Yao's work indeed is a contribution to Buddhist studies; however, like many other researchers, he has not elaborated on the advantages and disadvantages of the Buddhist theories. Furthermore, I do not know what those Buddhist theories mean to the contemporary world, though Yao said that he would like to "present the Buddhist theory of self-cognition in a way that will allow dialogue with contemporary sciences of the mind" ([Yao 2005](#), 5).¹

There are many different ideas and theories in Yao's valuable work. I choose to start with just one of them. The Buddhist text on which this paper is primarily based is *Abhidharma-nyāyānusāra-śāstra* (阿毘達磨順正理論 abbr. Ny) by Saṁghabhadra, which is extant in Chinese and has been studied in depth by Venerable Professor Dhammajoti. On the shoulders of those Buddhist philosophers, I am on safe ground to explore the potential of the Buddhist theories.

Unlike so-called comparative philosophy, but similar to Mark Siderits's fusion philosophy (2007) and Jay Garfield's way of engaging with Buddhism

(2015), and pertinent to hermeneutics, the basic approach of this paper is “problem-oriented philosophy,” of which the main proposal is not only that we, revolving around the central issue,² might get a better understanding of ancient philosophy (Buddhist philosophy in this paper) via utilizing the contemporary resources in philosophy, sciences, etc., but also that the ancient philosophy would contribute to the contemporary issues in return. It is hoped that both sides could benefit from this approach in the end.

Before we get down to business, what do we mean by “self”-cognition (self-consciousness, self-knowledge, self-awareness, etc.)? Firstly, those questions pertain to “the self.”³ The self here may refer to self as enduring entity, or self as perceptual subject, or self as perceptual object, etc. We may ask questions like: Can we cognize the self or its nature? Do we need a self or subject of experience when perceiving things? Secondly, the question is about whether or not a mental state or consciousness cognizes “itself.” Although these two kinds of questions can be closely related,⁴ they are not the same.⁵ This paper is mainly concerned with the second one, although following the Buddhist doctrine of non-self, we also discuss issues pertinent to the first one. And in this paper, following Paul Williams (1998),⁶ my usage of “reflexive” and “reflective” is simply illustrated in the following diagram with metaphors provided by traditional commentators:

Reflexive / Same-order theory / a lamp can illumine both itself and others



Reflective / Higher-order theory / a knife cuts other things but not itself



I. *Samghabhadrā's Idea in Ny: A Very Brief Overview*

I.1. *Why reflexive self-cognition is not possible*

“[Question] Is there an awareness that knows all dharmas?”

Answer: No.

[Question] If the [view] that all dharmas are no-self is produced by the awareness, what is not known by this awareness?

Answer: **It does not know itself**⁷ (*svabhāva*),⁸ or dharmas that are associated (*saṃprayukta*) and co-exist (*sahabhū*) with it."⁹ (Yao 2005, 44)¹⁰

The issue of whether or not an awareness (or consciousness) cognizes itself could at least date back to the first century B.C., the period during which the above text is written. The basic thought here is that when Buddha's consciousness knows that everything is impermanent or non-self, he must know everything, including the consciousness itself at that same moment.¹¹ The Sarvāstivādins hold the exact opposite; they argue that an awareness cannot cognize itself at the moment when it exists and cognizes other dharmas, though a later awareness can cognize the earlier one.¹² Why is reflexive self-cognition not possible? There are many arguments in the Sarvāstivāda texts, and in Saṃghabhadra's summary and elaboration of those arguments. I think the following passage encapsulates his core argument:

"If [the condition] is absent, the dharma will not arise. If it is not absent, the dharma will arise, which establishes the condition as condition. It is never the case that a dharma lacks itself. Therefore, it is absurd to say that [a dharma] will not arise without the presence of itself."¹³ (Yao 2005, 52)

Based on the main principle of dependent origination in Buddhism that everything arises in dependence upon others, the reason here is that no dharma is causally dependent on itself; therefore, reflexive self-cognition is not possible.

Let us first unpack the idea of causality in Buddhism a little bit. In the Indian tradition, the process or requirement to corroborate a causal relation between A and B is as follows: (i) if there is A, there is B; and (ii) if there is no A, there is no B. For example, "Even if the following process is not repeated numerous times, the causal relation between the fire and the smoke can be confirmed through a series of processes such as 'before any of the fire and smoke being cognized; fire is cognized and then smoke is cognized; if fire is not cognized and then smoke is not cognized, etc.' . . . This is similar to the joint method of agreement and difference of J. S. Mill" (Katsura 2011, 175).

According to this rule or method, there is no causal relation between A and itself because "it is absurd to say that [a dharma] will not arise without the presence of itself." And since reflexive self-cognition is a form of cognition,¹⁴ which is causal, it entails that self-cognition is not possible because there is no causal relation between cognition and itself.¹⁵

At first glance, it seems that Saṃghabhadra's point that there is no causal relation between a dharma and itself just follows by definition (self-cognition is nonsense by definition), not by argument. Furthermore, it may be objected that there is indeed a causal relation between A and A, because if there is A, there is A; and if there is no A, there is no A. However, Saṃghabhadra's point is that it is impossible for us to conceive that there is A without A, so there is

no empirical meaning or content to claiming a causal relation between A and A. That is why he says that “it is never the case that a dharma lacks itself.”

It may be also objected that just as we are capable of seeing or touching ourselves (our bodies), we can also cognize ourselves, and therefore self-cognition is possible. However, that is not an accurate picture. We can touch ourselves by our hands, that is, one part of the body as a composite whole can touch other parts. A composite is something that can be analyzed or divided into parts; in contrast, a dharma is an ontological primitive, which cannot be further analyzed or divided. When we consider that a cognition or consciousness cannot cognize itself, this cognition is a dharma that can be neither synchronically nor diachronically divided. However, we can indeed be self-conscious in the sense that a successive consciousness can cognize the preceding one, and this series of consciousness is conventionally one series, though precisely speaking, it is not self-consciousness in the sense that a dharma cognizes itself. We will present Saṃghabhadra’s idea as a reflective model of consciousness in the following.

1.2. A reflective model of consciousness

In Ny, Saṃghabhadra thinks that there are three types of perception¹⁶ (Yao 2005, 86ff.; Dhammajoti 2007b, 137ff.):

(1) “Sense-based perception”

For example, the production of visual consciousness is conditioned by the visual faculty and visual object. There are five outer sensory faculties¹⁷ including the visual faculty, auditory faculty, olfactory faculty, gustatory faculty, and tactile faculty, based on which are five corresponding consciousnesses and perceptions, and according to which are five corresponding objects. For the Sarvāstivādins, this perception involves a kind of simultaneous causation, for example, the visual consciousness conditioned by the visual faculty and visual object arises with them simultaneously (at the same moment). In Buddhism, a moment (*kṣaṇa*) is the smallest time unit, but it is not without duration. Like CPU’s clock, it is the smallest unit of time with duration, in which a causal event can occur, that is, a cause and its effect may coexist at the same moment.¹⁸ This kind of simultaneous causation is important to the Sarvāstivādins because they are direct realists who take seriously the direct perception, wherein objects are real and existent.

(2) “Experiential perception”

For example, we have a sensation (*vedanā*) or an experience of feeling, such as pleasant, painful, and neither-pleasant-nor-painful.¹⁹ This perception pertains to the dharmas like sensation, categorization (*saṃjñā*) or stereotyping, volition (*cetanā*) or mental act, and attention (*manaskāra*), concomitant with the consciousness²⁰ of the first-type

perception at the same moment.²¹ There is another kind of simultaneous causation between these concomitant dharmas and sensory consciousness; that is, they co-arise at the same moment and are reciprocally causes and effects, interdependent upon each other, just like a tripod.

(3) "Awareness as perception (perceptual awareness)"

At the first moment, there is the first-type perception and sensory consciousness accompanied with the second-type perception. At the immediately successive moment, with the contents of (1) or (2) as object, mental consciousness, for example, can apprehend that "it is blue," or that "I've perceived some object," or that "I've experienced some feeling," etc., if the function of discernment of the concomitant dharmas is strong. If the function is weak, mental consciousness can only grasp the mere object (Dhammajoti 2007b, 139) without conceptual construction, that is, we still cannot make a verbal report or judgment using conceptions. In any case, this is a kind of forward causation in which the resulting mental consciousness of the second moment is conditioned by the first-moment consciousness as base or faculty²² and its content as object.²³ Therefore, not until the second moment are we in some sense conscious of the first-type or the second-type perception,²⁴ though we are not completely unconscious at the first moment since we still have some sort of sensory perception accompanied with feeling, etc. In sum, we can see that it is a reflective model of consciousness, which can be illustrated with the following figure.

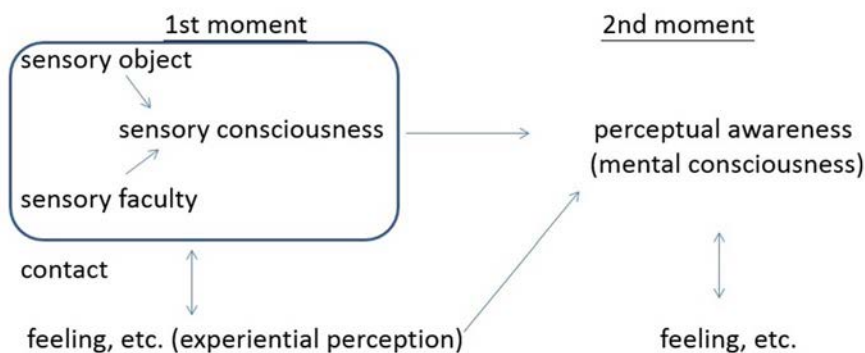


Figure adapted from Yao 2005: 83, 88 and revised by the author.

This model of consciousness is reflective because a successive consciousness cognizes the preceding one but not itself, and the model is causal because the relation between them is forward causation, and is perceptual

as well because there is the resulting perception of the third type at the second moment. To put it crudely, we can consider that the first moment pertains to the five outer-sense consciousnesses and the second moment pertains to the sixth inner-sense consciousness. However, the perception here is not just simply perception, as aforementioned, each act of perception and consciousness, no matter inner or outer, is concomitant with feeling, stereotyping or thinking, volition, attending, etc., though functioning in varying degrees. To explore the potential of this model, let us turn to Armstrong's discussion on introspective consciousness.

II. Armstrong's Introspective Consciousness: Buddhism Plug-in Installed

We may have perception but still be unconscious in some sense. Armstrong's famous example of a long-distance driver illustrates this point very clearly:

"After driving for long periods of time, particularly at night, it is possible to 'come to' and realize that for some time past one has been driving without being aware of what one has been doing" (Armstrong 1997, 723)²⁵

Although without being aware of his driving during that past period, the driver must have had perception then, because he indeed had driven along the road. Accordingly, he was not completely unconscious then, that is, he was conscious in one sense. However, he was unconscious in another sense since he had not been aware of his driving. Armstrong thinks that during that past time, the driver had "perceptual consciousness" because "in perception, there is consciousness of what is currently going on in one's environment and in one's body" (Armstrong 1997, 723); however, the driver had perception but without "introspective consciousness," that is, he had unconscious perception.

In Saṃghabhadra's words, we can consider that the driver has the first type of perception and the second type, but lacks the third type. Introspective consciousness is similar to the mental consciousness mentioned previously. Like Saṃghabhadra's model, Armstrong's model of consciousness is perceptual, reflective, and causal. Armstrong's main points are as follows.

(1) perceptual

"Introspective consciousness . . . is a perception-like awareness of current states and activities in our own mind" (Armstrong 1997, 724). Contrary to perceptual consciousness based on outer senses, this consciousness is based on inner sense; that is, there is an internal process to scan our inner mental states.

(2) reflective

Armstrong's idea takes the specific form of the higher-order perception (HOP) theory of consciousness: "to be a conscious state is to be

the object of higher-order awareness by a perception-like faculty" (MacDonald 2009, 755). Accordingly, it's a reflective²⁶ model. Furthermore, "since introspection is itself a mental activity, it too may become the object of [another] introspective awareness" (Armstrong 1997, 724). It may be objected that it requires a second-order state for a first-order state to be conscious, but the second-order state also requires a higher-order state, etc.; consequently this theory is defective because of infinite regress.²⁷ However, a second-order state needs not to be conscious to make a first-order state conscious, so there is no problem of infinite regress.²⁸ (Lycan 2004, 96)

(3) causal and fallible

Just like outer perception, the relation between first-order state and second-order state is causal, and consequently, introspective consciousness is not infallible, though it is usually reliable under normal circumstances.

But one thing the HOP philosophers have not done²⁹ is that by regarding the relation as causation, they can, like Saṃghabhadra, argue against reflexive (same-order) theory and for the reflective model, as discussed previously.

(4) contingently private

It seems that we have privileged access to our own mental states, because "nobody else can have the direct awareness of my mental states"; however, this privilege or privacy "is contingent only" (Armstrong 1997, 724–725). Armstrong's idea is that it is not logically impossible that others have the direct perception of my mental states. At least, we can imagine someone who has "telepathic knowledge" (Armstrong 1993, 124).

In Buddhism (and in India), it is not just a logical possibility or imagination, it is admitted that some people can perceive others' present mental states. In any case, since the relation between first-order state and second-order state is causal, it is not logically necessary, that is, it is contingent for us to have this privacy obtained from the relation, which could be changed though it is usually private in some sense.

(5) theory-laden

For Armstrong, "introspection is theory-laden" because "we learn to organize what we introspect as being states of . . . a single continuing entity: our self" (Armstrong 1997, 726). Similar to Buddhism, the self is a theory or fiction based on a series of successive consciousnesses without a single enduring entity. We learn to assume there is a self and attribute the mental states to this self with our conceptual tools or narratives. "There is nothing necessary about the assumption [of the self]. It may even be denied on occasion. Less sophisticated persons than ourselves,³⁰ on becoming aware of a

murderous impulse springing up, may attribute it . . . to a devil who has entered them” (Armstrong 1997, 727).

In some cases, it seems that we can give up this fictional self. Moreover, we can deny that there is a necessary connection between (i) the what-it-is-like aspect and (ii) the for-me aspect³¹ since in fact there is no self. “In Dickens’s *Hard Times*, the dying Mrs. Gradgrind says that there seems to be a pain in the room, but she is not prepared to say that it is actually *she* that has got it” (Armstrong 1997, 727). In Buddhism, there is no self as entity, and there is self as conventional (theoretical) concept and as false consciousness, which we can get rid of; so it is possible that in the room there is pain belonging to no one.

So far, we have explored the points of the reflective model of consciousness or HOP theory of consciousness; however, I am not stating that these two authors have exactly the same theory. In fact, there are differences between their theories. For example, although Armstrong mentions that the assumption of self or unity of consciousness is not necessary, he would be very pleased to admit the brain as the continuing unity³² since he is a physicalist. However, Saṃghabhadra is never a naïve materialist, and for a Buddhist like him, there is no self whatsoever. Despite the differences between them, what I am trying to do is bring out the best part in these two theories, although I emphasize the Buddhist perspective a little more. To this purpose, let us see how the points discussed so far, might be able to address criticisms of HOP theory.

III. Further Remarks from the Buddhist Perspective

III.1. Higher-order “perception”

One important issue of HOP theory pertains to whether or not HO “perception” is perception. For example, “in perception there are three items (perceived object, perceptual experience, and belief/judgment based on it) whereas in self-knowledge there are only two (first-order mental state [object] and belief/judgment based on it)” (MacDonald 2009, 755–756); that is, it seems there is no what-it-is-likeness for HO “perception.” This kind of criticism is not only from those who are opposed to the HO theory,³³ but also from the higher-order thought (HOT) theory, which proposes that a conscious mental state is the object of a higher-order thought, not of a higher-order perception. Rosenthal (1997, 740) says: “If our being conscious of a mental state is like perceiving something, our being conscious of it will involve the occurrence of some mental quality; otherwise the analogy with perception will be idle.” There must be some extra sensory quality only for the HO “perception,” but the opponents think there is not (Rosenthal 2009, 241). Accordingly, the HO “perception” is not a form of perception at all, and this theory fails. We could reply to this criticism, like William G. Lycan,

with a more or less compromising proposition that inner sense does not need to be exactly like outer senses (Lycan 2004, 100–101); that is, unlike outer senses, introspection is a peculiar perception without its own distinctive phenomenal experience or sensory qualities.

It seems that even the HOP philosophers agree that inner sensing has no distinctive sensory qualities (Gertler 2011, 140). Is it so? As mentioned previously, in Buddhist theory, there are feeling, stereotyping, volition, etc., accompanied with every perception or consciousness; that is, there is no mental state without experiential concomitants that belong to the second-type perception in our reflective model. The third-type perception (HO perception) at the second moment may receive the content not only of the first-type perception, but also of the second type; furthermore, the third type has its own experiential concomitants that can be cognized in later moment. Those concomitants could be regarded as inner sensory qualities for the HO perception.

However, do our outer perceptions necessarily involve sensory qualities? Considering the case of blind-sight, people can receive the data or information from the environment and can process the data so that they can pass through a road with obstacles on it, but without visual phenomenal experience. Whether or not the case of blind-sight is perception and whether or not there is any what-it-is-likeness involved will carry a lot of weight with us. It is the responsibility of opponents of HOP to argue that all perceptions must, without exception, involve what-it-is-likeness. With this “hard problem of consciousness” unresolved, let us try to take a Buddhist detour.

In fact, in Buddhism, the three constituents in perception are sense faculty (not listed in the three items aforementioned by MacDonald), sense object, and sense consciousness. The concept of sense consciousness, which includes the five outer-sense consciousnesses and the sixth inner-sense consciousness, involves “perceptual experience” whatsoever it means and “belief/judgement”; and as we can see, it involves more than these two. This concept can accommodate the case under which we have judgment in some sense, where the received data is processed for us to pass the obstacles, but without “apparent” visual phenomenal experience, which is not a necessary condition for the sense consciousness, because “consciousness (*vijñāna*)” mainly means “distinguishing”; it also accommodates the case wherein we have unconscious pain, when without a second-order state, or the case wherein we have pain without further conceptual judgment when the function of judgment is weak. This concept can fit in with these cases, though we have no consensus on these cases. This concept is quite complicated because the concept of perception is never simple in Buddhism. But there is another interesting problem for our model, that is, what is this inner faculty?³⁴

It definitely is not a single physical organ or something like the mind’s eye. Both Lycan and Armstrong deny that there is an inner sense organ, and

they use terms like “internal attention mechanisms” (Lycan 2004, 99), and “a self-scanning process” (Armstrong 1993, 324). Then with what do we introspect our mental state? With nothing! Armstrong’s reason is that “if there were an organ involved it would be something whose operation was under the direct control of our will. This, in turn, would demand a power of gaining direct awareness of the different states of this ‘introspective organ’ ” (Armstrong 1993, 325). Although Armstrong’s main tactic here is to avoid infinite regress, my elaboration is as follows: it is not that there is a little man or ghost inside us to control some inner mental organ; there is neither a mysterious little man nor an organ. There are only processes or mechanisms that can causally result in the HO consciousness, which is conscious of or cognizant of the lower-order mental state.

In Buddhism, philosophers also struggle with this problem of inner faculty. As previously mentioned, they also hold that sense faculty is not just a sense organ but a system or mechanism in which the information from the environment can be registered and transmitted. Since they disavow the enduring self, there is no inside little man by whom some internal organ can be controlled. To completely hold the doctrine of non-self and of impermanence, they develop a theory of momentariness, which holds that every dharma exists for just one moment (*kṣaṇa*). Therefore, for them, the reasonable option for this inner faculty is the immediately preceding consciousness because there is another sense of sense faculty as “base” (*āśraya*). Since there is just a series of momentary consciousnesses, every consciousness is conditioned by its preceding consciousness with registered data and accompanied with concomitant dharmas, and is also a base upon which its following consciousness is dependent,³⁵ just like a man is both a son and a father³⁶ belonging to the family tree. It seems like that the resulting higher-order consciousness has done the self-monitoring work, but actually it is the causal result through an internal mechanism. In short, there are causations and resulting consciousnesses, but without a doer. It is hoped that it is shown that we would overlook this issue if we overemphasize the what-it-is-likeness issue. After all, consciousness is more than what we are conscious of.

III.2. Causal, asymmetrical, and rational

As mentioned earlier in section II, our model is reflective and perceptual, and perception involves causal process, and so does introspection. The relation between first-order state and second-order state is causal. Accordingly, introspection is fallible, and furthermore, our privileged access to our mental states or so-called asymmetry is empirically contingent (see II.(4)).

Under normal circumstances, we have immediate awareness of our own states, which others do not have. However, in the same way that something may go wrong with outer perception if the causal process is somehow changed or abnormal, there could be cases like a first-order state without a

second-order state (unconscious pain for instance) and cases like a second-order state without a first-order state or with misinterpretation of it (pain from dental fear without actual pain³⁷ for instance). Furthermore, considering that the Buddhists hold that, ultimately speaking, there is no self and the conventional self is just a useful fiction superimposed onto our serial consciousnesses, even if we grant that in perception there is a what-it-is-like aspect, it is not necessarily accompanied with a for-me aspect. Hence, there could be cases like someone else's pain belonging to me, or my pain belonging to someone else (somatoparaphrenia³⁸ for instance); and there could even be pain that belongs to no one, as discussed previously (see II.(5)).

So far, we have argued against the noncontingent asymmetric access and the necessity of a for-me aspect. Here is just a short remark to those who assert that as long as we are rational animals it is logically impossible³⁹ that we do not have introspective access to our mental state, that is, we can never be self-blind (Shoemaker 1996). We could agree that in order to be rational in some sense or to be engaged in a certain level of theorizing, we must not be self-blind in the sense that we do not have normal introspective consciousness.⁴⁰ That is, this line of criticism is not necessarily incompatible with HOP theories.⁴¹ Furthermore, being without introspective consciousness might be irrational or nonrational for some Western rationalists, but is empirically possible, though sometimes abnormal, for some cognitive scientists, and could be rational for the Buddhists. We could have or could try practicing to have a first-order state without a second-order state, or have a first-order state with a second-order state but without conceptual superimposition, or have a first-order state with a second-order state with conceptual superimposition, which we do not take too seriously—in particular, “the self.”

IV. Conclusion

This paper has presented Saṃghabhadra's argument against reflexive self-cognition, that is, reflexive self-cognition is not possible because there is no causal relation between cognition and itself. We have argued that both Saṃghabhadra and Armstrong assume a model of consciousness that is reflective and perceptual. Moreover, one central contention of this investigation is that since perception involves causal processes, the relation between first-order mental state and second-order mental state is causal. Accordingly, the introspective consciousness is fallible, and furthermore, our privileged access to our mental states is empirically contingent. Both Saṃghabhadra and Armstrong accept that the concept of self is a useful fiction but not a necessary one. Then this paper tentatively suggests alternative replies to the criticisms of the HOP theory. On the one hand, the concomitants, like feeling, etc., accompanied with every consciousness, could be regarded as inner sensory qualities for the HO perception. On the other hand, the three items with regard to perception in Buddhism are faculty, object, and

consciousness. This concept of consciousness could accommodate the case under which we have judgment in some sense but without apparent phenomenal experience. Besides, it is shown that we would overlook the issue of faculty if we overemphasize the what-it-is-likeness issue. We also explore the implications of this model; for example, there could be cases wherein we have a first-order state without a second-order state, or we have a second-order state without a first-order state or with misinterpretation of it, or there is someone else's pain that belongs to me, or my pain that belongs to someone else, or pain that belongs to no one. Moreover, these can be related to meditative practice discussed above.

So far, we hope that we have shown the explanatory potential of our reflective model of consciousness. Before concluding, about the need of a question mark in the title of this paper must be reflected on. Most importantly, there is no self-cognition in the sense that a mental state or consciousness cognizes itself reflexively; ultimately speaking, there is no self as perceptual subject or as perceptual object. However, there is a conventional self as useful fiction, and if we take some theory-laden series of consciousnesses to count as one self, then we might say that we are self-conscious, though in fact there is only a reflective stream of consciousnesses.

Notes

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- 1 – Although Yao, in another paper (2006, 51–55), mentioned several points on contemporary philosophy and Buddhism, he does not elaborate further.
- 2 – This does not mean that different traditions share exactly the same issue or problematic.
- 3 – For example, [Bermúdez \(2007, 456\)](#) says that “ ‘self-consciousness’ . . . in philosophy and cognitive science . . . is best reserved for a form of awareness of one's self.”
- 4 – For example, Evan [Thompson \(2011\)](#), from the perspective of phenomenological tradition, argues that consciousness essentially involves self-awareness, which implies the existence of self or subject of experience.

- 5 – For example, “self-awareness” for Paul Williams refers to “consciousness aware *in some sense* of itself rather than consciousness aware of a *Self*, an *ātman*, which would of course be unacceptable to a Buddhist.” (1998, 3)
- 6 – Matthew D. MacKenzie has a similar usage: “*The Reflection Thesis*. Self-awareness is the product of a second-order awareness taking a distinct, first-order awareness as its intentional object. *The Reflexivity Thesis*. Conscious states simultaneously disclose both the object of consciousness and (aspect of) the conscious state itself.” (2007, 40)
- 7 – Bold words are emphasized by the author.
- 8 – “*Svabhāva*” is translated in English as “self-nature,” “substance,” “self-being,” etc., and is translated in the related Chinese passages both as “自性” (for example, in 《阿毘達磨發智論》 and in 《阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論》) and as “自體” (for example, in 《阿毘達磨順正理論》 and in 《阿毘達磨藏顯宗論》) by Xuanzang (玄奘), the first two texts are translated later than the last two. The earlier rendering “自體” (self-being, own-being) is closer to “itself.” And some people might say that “*svabhāva*” can’t be translated as “itself” here, however, to know a dharma means knowing a dharma’s nature (self-nature), so for awareness to know its nature means just knowing itself. Furthermore, considering the context of argument and disputes lasted more than hundreds of years, it is adequate to render “*svabhāva*” as “itself” here.
- 9 – Please note that this quotation is not from Ny, but from *Jñānaprasthāna* (阿毘達磨發智論), which is one of the earliest Abhidharma texts and regarded as the root text. For the original text, please see 《阿毘達磨發智論》卷1：「頗有一智知一切法耶？答：無。若此智生一切法非我，此智何所不知？答：不知自性、及此相應、俱有諸法。」 (CBETA, T26, no. 1544, p. 919, b9–11). Immediately followed this passage, there is another similar passage except in which the term “awareness” or “knowledge” is substituted with “consciousness”：《阿毘達磨發智論》卷1：「頗有一識了一切法耶？答：無。若此識生一切法非我，此識何所不了？答：不了自性、及此相應、俱有諸法。」 (CBETA, T26, no. 1544, p. 919, b11–13) Generally speaking, awareness or knowing is one function or state of consciousness. In Buddhism, consciousness can be accompanied with awareness as conjoined dharma, but it’s not always so. This distinction doesn’t matter to our argument here since both passages has exactly the same form.
- 10 – For the alternative translation, please see [Dhammajoti 2007a](#), 326–327.
- 11 – Generally speaking, in Abhidharma Buddhism, they accept the theory of momentariness, which suggests that every dharma exists for just one moment (*kṣaṇa*). In the above passage, an awareness (or consciousness)

actually is an awareness (or consciousness) of a single moment, which can be confirmed by Saṃghabhadra's repeating the issue in Ny. 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷74：「頗有一念智緣一切法不？不爾。豈不非我觀智知一切法皆非我耶？此亦不能緣一切法。」 (CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 742, a23–25)

- 12 – For example, 《阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論》卷9：「頗二剎那頃知一切法耶？答：有。謂此智初剎那頃，除其自性、相應、俱有，餘悉能知；第二剎那，亦知前自性、相應、俱有法。故答言：有。」 (CBETA, T27, no. 1545, p. 43, a15–17); see also Yao 2005, 46.
- 13 – 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷74：「隨有所闕，法則不生；不闕、便生，立為緣性。諸法無有闕自體時，故畢竟無『闕、不生』義。」 (CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 742, b4–5)
- 14 – It would be quite another story if one regards self-cognition as non-causal, but the Sarvāstivādins regard it as perception involving causal process. For those who deny that self-cognition or self-consciousness is causal, it's their responsibility to define what the relation involving no causal process is. And if the relation is non-causal and reflexive so that any consciousness seems always accompanied with self-consciousness, then it need to be explained why there are non-self-conscious perceptions like Armstrong's example of long-distance driver discussed in the following section. Moreover, why are there not infinitely reflexive self-cognitions at the same time? Anyway, the main purpose of this paper is rather positive than negative, i.e., to show the explanatory potential of the reflective and causal model.
- 15 – Someone might say that even though there is no causal relation between a cognition and itself, the causal process that causes a cognition might also cause a self-cognition simultaneously so that there is no self-causation. The Sarvāstivādins could reply that one cause or one set of causes, which has caused its effect or has done its job is not able to cause another effect. Since a cognition and its self-cognition are different, they can't not be effected by one and the same cause.
- 16 – 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷73：「然許現量總有三種：依根、領納、覺慧別故。依根現量：謂依五根現取色等五外境界。領納現量：謂受、想等心心所法正現在前。覺慧現量：謂於諸法隨其所應證自、共相。」 (CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 736, a9–13)
- 17 – A sensory faculty is not just a sense-organ like the eyes, but refers rather to the whole sensory system or mechanism to receive the outer signals and to transmit them, etc. Ganeri (2012, 133) points out: "A sense-organ, here, is not something like a nose, but rather a specific quality or capacity which a certain complex matter has; we would now speak, for example, of the olfactory aspect of the exteroceptive system."

- 18 – For more details, please see [Hu 2014](#).
- 19 – 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷2：「隨觸而生，領納可愛、及不可愛、俱相違觸，名為受蘊。領納即是能受用義，此復三種，謂：樂、及苦、不苦不樂。能益身心，故名為樂；能損身心，故名為苦；有所領納而非苦樂，名不苦不樂，如非黑非白。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 338, c5–9)
- 20 – In fact, those dharmas are concomitant with not only the five sensory consciousnesses but also the sixth consciousness (mental consciousness) pertaining to the third type of perception discussed below. Here is a simplified explanation for illustrative convenience.
- 21 – Actually there is another concomitant dharma named “contact” (*sparśa*), which refers to the state of the seeming contact of faculty, object, and resulting consciousness. And contact is the co-nascent condition for the arising of sensation or other dharmas. 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷2：「如契經說，眼及色為緣，生於眼識，三和合觸，俱起受、想、思，如是乃至意及法為緣，生於意識，三和合觸，俱起受、想、思。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 338, c22–24)
- 22 – 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷8：「由六識身無間滅已，皆名為意，此與意識作所依根。是故意識唯依過去。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 374, a25–26)
- 23 – 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷8：「如苦受等，必為領納現量受已，方有緣彼現量覺生；如是色等，必為依根現量受已，方有緣彼現量覺生。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 374, c24–26)
- 24 – *Ibid.*, and also see 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷8：「領納時者，謂為損、益時，爾時此受未為覺了境。．．．．．此滅過去，方能為境，生現憶念，此憶念位，名覺了時。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 374, c6–11)
- 25 – See also [Armstrong 1993](#), 93–94.
- 26 – Our reflective model in the previous section insists that the reflective awareness happens only at the later moment, but for Armstrong, it seems possible that the lower-order state and higher-order state could be at the same instant (1993, 105–106). However, whether the cognizing and the cognized are at the same instant or not, these two are still different states, so that the cognition is still not reflexive, but reflective. Furthermore, the duration of Armstrong’s instant could be longer than Buddhist’s moment; if that so, then the difference between the two models may be little.
- 27 – This criticism is quite popular in Buddhism, for example, Dignāga thinks that the other-illumination view (reflective model) “leads to an infinite regress: if a given cognition requires a second occurrence of consciousness to apprehend it, the second will require a third, etc.” ([Siderits 2011](#), 321)

- 28 – A similar reply in Buddhist studies: “there can be awareness of x without the awareness of the awareness of x. It would be question-begging to assume that there cannot be cognition of the cognition of the pot without cognition of that reflective cognition.” (Siderits 2011, 321)
- 29 – Armstrong employs a metaphor, which seems similar to the metaphors in Buddhist tradition: “A machine can scan itself only in the same sense that a man can eat himself. There must remain an absolute distinction between the eater and the eaten . . . between the scanner and the scanned” (1993: 107). But he has not clearly shown why there must be that absolute distinction.
- 30 – I don’t agree with Armstrong on this term “less sophisticated” or “primitive persons” (1993, 338) though I agree with him on this case. Being a platform which gods, devils, spirits may enter can be quite sophisticated, like a drama.
- 31 – See Liang and Lane 2009, 667. However, Liang and Lane’s reason is that for-me aspect sometimes can be replaced by for-other aspect, that is, there is still what-it-is-likeness for some subject except me (belonging to other though present to me). Here my point is that there might be what-it-is-likeness for no one (belonging to no one).
- 32 – This is not accurate because even the physical-constitution of the brain is changing all the time.
- 33 – “It seems widely agreed that introspection does not have this feature [sense-experience], and this is perhaps the most commonly given reason for denying that it should count as perception.” (Shoemaker 1996, 207)
- 34 – The issue of sense object is also important in Buddhism, however, since it’s not the issue or at least not an important issue for the HOP’s opponents, it is not pursued here.
- 35 – 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷11：「即此為他作所依止，故名為意；作能依止，故名為識。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 394, c18–19)；《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷8：「由六識身無間滅已，皆名為意，此與意識作所依根。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 374, a25–26)
- 36 – 《阿毘達磨順正理論》卷3：「論曰：即六識身無間滅已，能生後識，故名眼界。時分異故，別立無失，猶如子果立為父種。」(CBETA, T29, no. 1562, p. 342, b12–13)
- 37 – See the discussion in Rosenthal 2011, 435–436.
- 38 – Somatoparaphrenia is “a pathology in which mental states can be conscious even when they are represented as belonging to someone other than self” (Liang and Lane 2009, 662). Lane and Liang (2009,

2010) use this case to argue against Rosenthal's HOT theory and they make a distinction between conscious presence and mental ownership.

- 39 – Shoemaker argues against the position that “self-blindness . . . ought to be a logical possibility” (1996, 242).
- 40 – In Shoemaker's words, “a rational agent [who are ‘with normal intelligence, rationality, and conceptual capacity’] will give every indication of being a self-aware agent [‘who has normal introspective awareness of his or her own beliefs and desires’]” (1996, 236).
- 41 – Gertler (2011, 158) points out that “Shoemaker's central objections do not threaten the inner sense theory. The main problem is that these objections center on the idea that self-awareness *will* be achieved by rational creatures. But they do not directly concern the crux of the inner sense theory, which concerns *how* self-awareness is achieved.”

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