Mirror of Nature, Mirror of Self

Models of Consciousness in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta

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विश्वंदर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं
पश्यन्नात्मनिमायया बहिरिवोद्भूतंयथा निद्रया

The whole world is inside the self, like a city visible in a mirror.
One sees it *within* oneself as if arising *outside* due to illusion, like in
a dream.

<div align="right">Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram 1</div>

Contents

Acknowledgments

Introduction

How did reflection in a mirror become the predominant metaphor for consciousness and its relation with the mind and the world in Indian philosophy? Which role did it play in the major systems of Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta, and in their debates with other philosophical schools? And what makes this metaphor philosophically interesting and relevant even for contemporary philosophical concerns?

The first mirrors in India were, probably, pools of water, rock or clay containers of water (Enoch 2006:775), and ice.[1] Bronze-made flat or circular mirrors appeared around 2000 BCE during the Indus Valley civilization at Quetta and Harappa in today's Pakistan and Dholavira in Gujarat. The reflectivity of these mirrors varied and depended on the proportion of tin mixed with bronze (Srinivasan 2008:1699). To achieve a highly reflective surface, they needed to be polished for an entire day (Pillai 1992:39).

The reflective quality of mirrors afforded them a host of symbolic meanings and usages. Mirrors have been widely used in religious ceremonies and works of art; they played roles in poetry, prose, and drama (Granoff 2000:63–106; Goswamy 2020[2]). In Vedic society, mirrors were believed to avert evil. During the wedding ceremony, the bridegroom placed a mirror in the left hand of the bride, stating "Each form of him has become a counterform; that form of him we should look on."[3] Gonda suggests that this quote from the *Ṛgveda* may imply that the bride "reflects" the divine or primeval bride (Gonda 1980:150).

The symbolic use of mirrors, of course, is not unique to Indian culture. In Europe, from ancient history to this day, mirrors have assumed a variety of symbolic functions. They have symbolized truth and purity, but also the distortion of the truth (Pines 1998:20). In India, China, and Europe, in poetry

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[1] Mentioned in Abhinavagupta's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā-vivṛti-vimarśini*. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for this reference.

[2] I would like to thank Patrick Olivelle for the latter reference.

[3] *rūpaṁ-rūpaṃ pratirūpo babhūva tad asya rūpam praticakṣaṇāya/indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate yuktā hy asya harayaḥ śatā daśa//* (ṚV 6.47.18).

and in philosophy, the mirror serves as the main metaphor for the mind representing the external reality (Pines 1998:20–21; Ching 1983:226–244).

While we find depictions of the mind as the "mirror of nature" in Indian philosophy, it is the image of the mind as the mirror of consciousness that gained prominence in what is known as *pratibimbavāda*s, or "theories of reflection."[4] The metaphor stands for the idea that, just as a face, reflected in a mirror, appears where it is not, so do consciousness and its properties, such as the sense of self, subjectivity, and experience of qualia, stand in falsely perceived relations to cognitive and perceptive processes. As I will show in this monograph, the metaphor became a widespread metaphysical instrument used to address metaphysical, epistemological, and theological problems arising from a non-reductionist approach to consciousness. I will explore various models of interaction between consciousness, the mind-body complex,[5] and the world, based on the metaphor of reflection, in the Brahmanical philosophical schools of Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita-Vedānta, which share historical and conceptual continuities.

As opposed to the much-neglected field of Brahmanical philosophy of consciousness, scholarship on the Buddhist philosophy of consciousness has been flourishing for the last few decades.[6] From the perspective of

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[4] Plotinus is an example of a non-Indian theory of the mirror model of consciousness. He applies metaphors of reflection in various ways, some of which are rather similar to those found in Indian philosophy. Thus, he renders the myth of Narcissus falling in love with his own image as a metaphor for a person identifying with his or her own material body, which is nothing but a reflection of the soul, the only worthy object of one's attention (Davidson 1998:9–10).

[5] As opposed to Buddhist theories of consciousness, the Brahmanical theories usually distinguish between consciousness and the mind. Consciousness, or the self, is an ontologically independent substratum of awareness and subjectivity, whereas the mind is a mental "sense," or "instrument," responsible for cognitive, apperceptive, introspective, and other mental "activities," passively witnessed by consciousness.

[6] Some of the titles that can be mentioned here include Dan Arnold's *Buddhas, Brains, and Believing: The Problem of Intentionality in Classical Buddhist and Cognitive-Scientific Philosophy of Mind* (2012, 2014); Zhihua Yao's *The Buddhist Theory of Self-Cognition* (2005), Dan Lusthaus's *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih lun* (2002); Miri Albahari's *Analytical Buddhism: The Two-Tiered Illusion of Self* (2006); Christian Coseru's *Perceiving Reality: Consciousness, Intentionality, and Cognition in Buddhist Philosophy* (2012); Mark Siderits's *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy: Empty Persons* (2003); and William S. Waldron's *The Buddhist Unconscious: The Ālaya-vijñāna in the Context of Indian Buddhist Thought* (2003). One should also mention Jonardon Ganeri's excellent *The Self: Naturalism, Consciousness, and the First-Person Stance* (2006, 2012), where he discusses naturalist theories of self and consciousness in Buddhism, Cārvāka, and Nyāya. Research on Brahmanical non-reductionist theories of consciousness does not keep up with the wealth of literature on Buddhist theories produced in recent years, and the present study aims at minimizing the gap. Some aspects of consciousness in Sāṃkhya and Yoga have been discussed in Mikel Burley's *Classical Sānkhya and Yoga: An Indian Metaphysics of Experience* (2007). Sthaneshwar Timalsina explores consciousness in the Dṛṣṭisṛṣṭi school of Advaita Vedānta in his *Consciousness in Indian Philosophy: The Advaita Doctrine of 'Awareness Only'* (2009). Another book on consciousness in Advaita-Vedānta is Bina Gupta's *The Disinterested*

contemporary philosophy of mind, much of the appeal of Buddhist theories seems to lie in their reductive approach.[7] The Buddhists take consciousness to be nothing more than dynamic cognitive processes, thereby resonating with the widespread resistance among modern philosophers to hypostatization and reification of consciousness. In classical India, the major objections to Buddhist reductionism came from the Brahmanical philosophical traditions. Brahmanical interlocutors of the Buddhists, especially those representing Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita-Vedānta schools, defended the radical ontological independence of consciousness, perceived as a phenomenal monad, unified and permanent. Their side in the centuries-long debate with Buddhism on the nature of consciousness is the subject of this book. Brahmanical non-reductionist theories of consciousness have much to contribute to contemporary debates on consciousness, precisely because they present a viable alternative to the shortcomings of reductionist theories.

The major Buddhist criticism of Brahmanical theories of consciousness has been that an entity ontologically independent from mental and physical processes cannot interact with these processes in any way, while our experience tells us that consciousness is engaged in the acts of perception, cognition, imagination, etc. Moreover, postulation of consciousness as separate from mental processes is redundant, whereas it could be perfectly well ascribed to the mental faculty. Gradually, the metaphor of mirror reflection gained currency in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita-Vedānta as the most successful response to Buddhists attacks. Any types of relations between consciousness, the mind, and the world are merely apparent: like the relation between the mirror and reflected objects—they are not real. At the same time, the mirror model explained the intentionality of mental states as "reflecting," or representing the objects of cognition.

Despite the overwhelming presence of "theories of reflection" (*pratibimbavāda*s) in the major philosophical traditions in India, they have received little attention in scholarship to date. *Mirror of Nature, Mirror of Self* is the first systematic exploration of mirror models of consciousness in Sāṃkhya, Yoga and Advaita-Vedānta. By grounding these theories in their historical intellectual context, the book sheds a new light on an

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Witness: A Fragment of Advaita Vedānta Phenomenology (1998). Her other book about theories of consciousness in Indian philosophy is *Cit: Consciousness* (2003).

[7] For a thorough and critical discussion of the recent trend to read Buddhism as reductionism in the spirit of Derek Parfit, see Hanner 2018.

intense philosophical conversation between Indian reductionists and non-reductionists about consciousness. The book explores the impact of Indian mirror models on theories of mental representation, theories of knowledge, philosophy of language, debates on illusory causality and on the relationship between noumena and phenomena, as well as soteriological and theological theories. My reading of the classical texts on mirror models of consciousness draws not only on traditional commentaries, but also on the "commentaries" of a contemporary Anglophone Bengali interpreter, Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (1875–1949), whose studies in Sāṃkhya and Yoga have hardly been discussed, perhaps due to the notorious difficulty of his philosophical style. It is about time that Bhattacharyya's interpretations of these traditions become part of the discourse. Finally, by comparing mirror models of consciousness in Indian philosophy with Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror stage and by engaging with theories of consciousness in analytic philosophy, the book contributes to contemporary debates. Hopefully, the findings of the present research will be fruitful also for the future study of those theories of reflection, with which I engaged in this monograph only in passing, such as highly interesting theories of *pratibimba* in Madhyamaka and Yogācāra Buddhism, Kashmiri Śaivism, Madhva's Dvaita-Vedānta, etc.[8]

Richard Rorty, in his influential *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, criticizes the usage of mirror imagery by modern philosophers and its implication that philosophy can "reflect" reality based on reliable vehicles, such as "minds" or "language." Rorty calls this representationalist (in a broad sense) view "philosophy-as-epistemology" (2009:18) and points out that various philosophical problems, such as the problem of mind and matter, or problems of knowledge, stem from using a particular philosophical vocabulary rather than from a difficulty to articulate the actual state of affairs. The formulation of epistemological problems rests on the false assumption that there is some foundational *framework* for knowledge, a general *theory* of knowledge, whereas in fact there are only context-sensitive, pragmatic, *tools* for producing knowledge.

> It is the notion that human activity (and inquiry, the search for knowledge, in particular) takes place within a framework which can be isolated prior to

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[8] On Abhinavagupta's (tenth- to eleventh-century) theory of reflection, see Lawrence 2005 and Kaul 2020. On a theory of reflection in Kashmiri Śaivism, see Ratié 2017 and Kaul's PhD dissertation (unpublished). On Madhva's (thirteenth-century) theory, see Sharma 1986:438–448. On Buddhist theories of reflection, see Wayman 1971 and 1984.

the conclusion of inquiry—a set of presuppositions discoverable a priori—
which links contemporary philosophy to the Descartes-Locke-Kant tradi-
tion. For the notion that there is such a framework only makes sense if we
think of this framework as imposed by the nature of the knowing subject,
by the nature of his faculties or by the nature of the medium within which
he works. [. . .] The notion that there could such a thing as "foundations
of knowledge" (*all* knowledge—in every field, past, present, and future) or a
"theory of representation" (*all* representation, in familiar vocabularies and
those not yet dreamed of) depends on the assumption that there is some a
priori constraint. (2009:9)

Rorty's argument is partially based on genealogy of philosophy-as-
epistemology, which he traces to the seventeenth century, in particular to
Locke's notion of "mental processes," and to Descartes's notion of the "mind"
as a separate entity in which these processes take place (3). Thus, philosophy-
as-epistemology, with its representationalism, should not be seen as various
attempts to solve eternal philosophical problems, but rather as building upon
certain notions of the mental entity and processes, which have come to be
regarded as conceptually significant only in the modern period.

Curiously enough, what Rorty calls "philosophy-as-epistemology" is
found not only in Western modern philosophy, nor his criticism of such a
view is entirely new. One of the claims put forward in the present study is that
mirror metaphors used in the context of theories of cognition in Sāṃkhya
and Yoga, and to some extent in Advaita Vedānta, are various kinds of rep-
resentationalism about the mind, the external objects, and consciousness.
The general approach of "philosophy-as-epistemology," known in India as
pramāṇavāda, has been vehemently criticized by Nāgārjuna already in the
third century AD. At the same time, in classical Indian philosophy, we find
various arguments against the very application of mirror imagery as an ap-
propriate description of epistemic, metaphysical, and cognitive relations
between consciousness, the mind, and the external objects. Mirror-model
theorists are aware of these criticisms, as well as of the many ways in which
language may mislead or misrepresent, due to its inherent structure. Their
view of philosophy and of language, however, is thoroughly optimistic. It is
important to identify the potential ways of misrepresenting the reality and
the ways in which we superimpose our concepts and notions upon what
is real. Yet the possibility of apprehending the real is also there and should
not be given up. The fact that Indian representationalism precedes Lockean

philosophy of the "mirror of nature" by many centuries somewhat softens Rorty's historicism. This is precisely where a comparative cross-cultural approach to philosophy is indispensable: both claims to universality of Western philosophy and its historical relativization can only be substantiated by careful examination of parallel notions from non-Western traditions. Are there differences between Lockean and Sāṃkhya representationalist theories? No doubt. Are the concerns of modern philosophy attempting to come to terms with scientific discoveries different from the soteriological, metaphysical, and sectarian concerns of Brahmanical philosophers? Yes, they are different. Are similarities between Western and Indian theories close enough to classify both as kinds of representationalism? I believe they are. Moreover, these similarities, coupled with differences, justify an exploration of representationalism as a *universal* philosophical position, allowing for varieties and alternatives.

The book's overall structure is guided by historical and philosophical concerns. As one of the primary goals is to narrate a history of mirror models of consciousness in Indian philosophy, the contents of the book are organized chronologically and according to particular philosophical schools. This approach enables a description of the relatively long and rich development of theories of reflection in India, showing historical and conceptual continuities, as well as contextualizing these theories in the debates within philosophical traditions, responses to opponents, standardized arguments, and original contributions. At the same time, historical textual exploration of mirror models is the basis for my own philosophical interpretation, assessment of, and engagement with the arguments behind these models.

In Chapter 1, I will present a historical background of mirror models of consciousness in Indian philosophy. The point of departure will be the early Vedic theory of resemblances between human and divine realms. I will argue that later theories of reflection preserve the general structure of the Vedic model of formal causation. After that, I will turn to the early theory of reflection in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* in the famous story of Prajāpati's instruction to Indra and Virocana. In the following sections of this chapter, I will survey reductionist mirror models in Buddhism, as well as mirror models in Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and Kaśmiri Śaivism. These sections are dedicated to mapping various positions, differing on the interpretation of the optical process involved in reflection in a mirror, and its implications for the phenomenon of consciousness and its relations with mental processes and the objects of cognition.

Chapter 2 will explore the philosophical traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, which developed a notion of mirror reflection to explain the illusory interaction between consciousness and the mind, regarded as ontologically distinct entities. These two schools made an implicit connection between the mental representation of external objects by the mind and the mental representation of consciousness. The chapter discusses early theories of external objects reflected in the mind, consciousness reflected in the mind, and the mind reflected in consciousness in the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*, attributed to Vedavyāsa (fourth-fifth centuries CE), as recorded in Bhavya's *Madhyamakahṛdayakārikā* (sixth century CE), in the *Yuktidīpikā* (seventh to eighth centuries CE), and other texts, presenting entirely unexplored theories of reflection. It also sheds a new light on the later Vācaspati Miśra's (tenth-century) theory of reflection of consciousness in the mind and Vijñānabhikṣu's (sixteenth-century) theory of mutual reflection of consciousness in the mind and then back in consciousness. Finally, it engages, for the first time, with the philosophically creative, but little-known interpretation of theories of reflection in Sāṃkhya and Yoga by Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya.

Chapter 3 focuses on the non-dualist tradition of Advaita-Vedānta, which holds that the multiplicity of individual selves is nothing but reflections of one transcendent self. This school develops the notion of *ahaṃkāra* (the "I-maker") as an entity supervenient upon the illusory identity between the mind and consciousness and mediating between the two. The chapter examines, for the first time, Śaṅkara's (seventh to eighth centuries') non-dualist reinterpretation of the Sāṃkhya model of consciousness reflected in the mind, its development by Padmapāda (eighth to ninth centuries), with further elaborations by Prakāśātman (eleventh to twelfth centuries), as well as later developments (mirror models of one consciousness reinterpreted in terms of identity between the god and individual selves, reported by Appayya Dīkṣita in the sixteenth century). The texts composed by these philosophers, representing what came to be known as the Vivaraṇa sub-school of Advaita, have been seriously understudied to date.

Chapter 4 takes a foray into a modern mirror model of consciousness, namely Lacan's theory of the mirror stage. According to Lacan, the interplay between one's reflection in a mirror and the "intra-organic mirror" located in the cerebral cortex is responsible for the mechanism of identities between objective and subjective contents in the formation of the individual. By comparing Lacan's theory with Indian mirror models, the

chapter brings forward the ontological basis of mirror-like interaction between consciousness, the mind, the society, and the world—that is, the illusory identity of different entities. The chapter also negotiates with Thomas Metzinger's representational theory of consciousness to construct a plausible theory of mental representation of consciousness, based on Indian mirror models, and suggests that such a theory provides a tenable solution to the hard problem of consciousness. In this chapter, I demonstrate the plausibility of non-reductionism about consciousness proposed by Brahmanical philosophers—plausibility enhanced by mirror models. As I argue, mirror models of consciousness developed in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita-Vedānta convincingly ward off not only Buddhist objections, but also some of the objections coming from contemporary philosophers, such as Jaegwon Kim's arguments against metaphysical dualism. Finally, I defend a new model of consciousness, integrating consciousness-matter dualism, mind naturalism, and representationalism about consciousness.

1

Mirror Models of Consciousness in Early Sources and Indian Philosophical Systems

1.1 Early Vedic Metaphysics of Image Formation

The subject of this section is the early Vedic theory of resemblances between human and divine realities and its explanation of the appearance of forms in human reality. I will argue that the concepts of *pramā* (model, prototype) and *pratimā* (counterpart, image), as well as their correlatives *rūpa* (form) and *pratirūpa* (counterform) must be seen as conceptual predecessors of the later *bimba* (prototype) and *pratibimba* (reflection). I will demonstrate that the later theories of reflection preserve the general structure of the early Vedic model of formal causation, according to which the images of the phenomenal reality resemble the original forms of the noumenal reality. I will also show how the transition from metaphysics of resemblance in the early Vedas to metaphysics of identity in the *Upaniṣads* prepares the ground for the *Upaniṣadic* theories of reflection.

1.1.1 Vedic Metaphysics of Resemblance

One of the recurrent topics in the Vedic textual corpus, starting with the *Saṃhitā* and ending with the *Upaniṣad*s, has been the correct identification of cosmic connections (*bandhu/nidāna/upaniṣad*) between different phenomena (Smith 1989:72). In early Vedic cosmology, sacrificial activities were considered to have a powerful impact on cosmic events, and sacrifice was intended not only for bringing about personal benefits and protection, but also for maintaining the cosmic order, without which chaos would persist and the universe would collapse into the demonic nonbeing (*asat*) (Ram-Prasad 2001:9–11; Goman and Laura 1972:56–57). In the *Brāhmaṇa*s, the understanding of the precise relations between the elements of the ritual and cosmic reality was regarded a necessary condition for the success of

the offering. These relations were based on resemblances between the individual components of the sacrifice and particularities of divine and mythical realities, as well as between the overall structure of the sacrifice and the cosmic order in its entirety:

> Vedic ritualism was directed toward activating the connections that bind the ritual world to the world(s) at large; the ritual order lends its form to a cosmic order, a universal structure emanating from the structured sequence of rites. (Smith 1989:53–54)

Smith describes two sorts of Vedic connections—"vertical" and "horizontal." *Vertical* connections refer to correspondences between the elements found in the higher planes and their correlatives in the human world (Smith 1989:73; Coomaraswamy 1936:45). *Horizontal* connections link phenomena on the same cosmological level (Smith 1989:73).

The relation between the correspondences is not symmetrical. The elements found in the divine realms are called *pramā* (model, prototype), while their counterparts in the human world are called *pratimā* (counterpart, image) (Smith 1989:73, 76). The constant concern of the Vedic experts with the sacrificial-cosmic order has been "What was the prototype (*pramā*), what was the counterpart (*pratimā*), and what was the connection (*nidāna*) between them?" (*ka asīt pramā pratimā kiṁ nidānam*, ṚV 10.130.3). Thus, it is said that the creator-god Prajāpati, also identified with the material cause of the universe, has emitted the year as a counterpart (*pratimā*) of his own self (*ātman*) (ŚB 11.1.6.13). Another counterpart of Prajāpati is the entire sacrifice as a unified whole. Sacrifice, thus, is the symbol of the universe in its entirety, and its parts are the counterparts of the cosmic parts (ŚB 11.1.8.3; Smith 1989:73–74).

Horizontal correspondences between the prototype and its counterpart appear in the relation between the sacrificer and the sacrificial oblation. Ideally, a sacrificer is expected to sacrifice himself, because he is a counterpart of the primordial cosmic man (*puruṣa*) sacrificed by the gods. Luckily for him, a substitute in the form of an animal or a plant is permitted. There is a horizontal correspondence between human sacrifice, which becomes a sacrificial prototype, and the animal sacrifice—its counterpart. Although the correspondence is horizontal—the prototype and its counterpart are found in this world—yet the two stand in vertical hierarchical relations. While the sacrificer is a counterpart of the primordial cosmic man,

as a prototype he is valued higher than the animals or the plants (Smith 1989:75–76).

Another important Vedic terminology of resemblance is the pair of *rūpa* (form) and *pratirūpa* (counterform). Closely related to the concepts of *pramā/pratimā*, *rūpa* indicates the original form on the transcendent plane, *pratirūpa*—its image or reflection in the immanent realm. Thus, in the ṚV 6.47.18, it is stated that the god Indra's form (*rūpa*) corresponds to every form (*rūpa*), and everything is regarded as his image (*pratirūpa*).

Coomaraswamy regards the metaphysics of *rūpa/pratirūpa* as "Vedic exemplarism" and compares it to Bonaventure's and other Neo-Platonic idealist theories (1936:44–64). In Bonaventure's exemplarism, phenomenal realities are explained as emanations and reflections of the universal forms found in god's mind. In Vedic exemplarism, the forms of the "angelic" level (*adhidaivata*) are projected and reflected on the "human" level (*adhyātma*) (45). Smith, however, points out that "*pratirūpas* or resembling images are made as well as discovered, a phenomenon that tends to distinguish this conception from the Platonic one" (Smith 1989:76). In the sacrificial context, the counterforms are actively constructed as "the works of art (*śilpa*)" and "made to *conform* to its model" (77).

Moreover, sacrificial counterforms must conform to prototypes in a special manner called *abhirūpa* ("appropriate form"): the prototypes and their images cannot be identical (77). Two potential excesses must always be avoided: the one is called *jāmi* (excessive resemblance), and another is *pṛthak* (complete difference). In the ritual context, the elements of excessive resemblance are regarded as "fruitlessly reduplicative within a ritual sequence," and are compared to a homosexual copulation, a fruitless act of "those too alike." On the other hand, elements having no connection at all are not even capable of joining with others (Smith 1989:51–52). The appropriate counterpart must resemble the prototype just enough, without being identical or too different. The emphasis on resemblances (*sāmānya*) between prototypes and their counterparts indicate, for Smith, discontinuity rather than continuity between early Vedic metaphysics of resemblances and metaphysics of identity in the *Upaniṣads*. While some scholars regard the equation of the self with the cosmos as the logical conclusion of the Vedic searches for the cosmic correspondences, Smith points out that complete identity between correspondences is certainly faulty of being a *jāmi*, or excessive resemblance, which should be avoided by all means in the early Vedic thought (Smith 1989:194–195).

Smith's emphasis on the discontinuity between the concepts of resemblance and identity is important. The concept of resemblance allows the hierarchical metaphysics of the Vedas, as well as the sacrificial hierarchical structures. Smith demonstrates this hierarchical resemblance based on the rules of ritual substitution, where complex, expensive, and difficult-to-obtain sacrificial components can be replaced by those simpler, cheaper, and easier to obtain. For instance, instead of the impossible (but ideal) sacrifice of a thousand years, it is permitted to perform its lesser but equivalent counterpart lasting one year only (the *tāpaścita* ritual) (Smith 1989:186–187; ŚB 12.3.3.5–14). The concept of hierarchical resemblance also makes the metaphysical world formation possible. The creator's (in this case, Prajāpati's) unity of form (*ekarūpatva*) cannot infinitely reproduce its own identical replicas. On the other hand, the creator may not create something completely other to himself, because this otherness must be contained in him at least in its potential form. Any change of form, any diversity of forms in the process of creation may, however, be explained by gradual decrease of resemblance of creation to its creator. Various forms are less perfect, less complete, but nevertheless somewhat similar to their original.

Smith's distinction between resemblance and identity duly noticed, we must also pay attention to the moment shared by resemblance and identity. Even if an image is not entirely identical with its prototype, there must be an identical common aspect responsible for their similarity. At the same time, when two elements are said to be completely identical, there must be some difference between the two, making identity akin to resemblance; otherwise, there would only be one element identical with itself. Despite the differences between the concept of "identity" and the concept of "resemblance," the relation between the two concepts is that of a conceptual continuity rather than of a conceptual break. This continuity is evident in the fact that the model of the transcendent prototype (*pramā/rūpa*) and its immanent image (*pratimā/pratirūpa*), as well as the corresponding connection between the two (*nidāna/bandhu*) survives in the *Upaniṣads*. Whereas the sacrificial context (*adhiyajña*) is still of some concern for the authors of the *Upaniṣads*, the search for the correspondences between the divine realm (*adhidaivata*) and the "human" level (*adhyātma*) are increasingly reconceptualized in physiological context. The knowledge of correspondences between the faculties and cosmic phenomena becomes more important than the correspondences between rituals and their divine prototypes (Olivelle 2008:xlix). Although resemblances are replaced by identities, and ritual-centered metaphysics is

replaced by anthropocentric metaphysics, the prototype-counterform paradigm is equally shared by Vedic theory of resemblances and the *Upaniṣadic* theory of identity.

1.1.2 The General Condition of Phenomenal Representation (GCPR)

For the sake of a more rigorous formulation of the Vedic model of correspondences, I would like to propose a methodological distinction between the pairs of *pramā/pratimā* and *rūpa/pratirūpa*.[1] *Pramā-pratimā-nidāna* is the formal ontological framework for the relation between noumenon and its phenomenal representation. Implicit in this relation is the efficient causality of phenomenal representation, the process during which the noumenal is manifested in the phenomenal. I suggest calling the efficient cause of this transformation "*māyā*." Although often translated as "illusion," the word "*māyā*" in the Vedic texts seems to have a more general and technical meaning of "making *pramā* into *pratimā*." Thus, in ṚV 6.47.18, *māyā* is mentioned in conjunction with *rūpa* and *pratirūpa*: ". . . the counterform (*pratirūpa*) of every form (*rūpa*); his form is to be seen in all things. By means of his *māyā* Indra moves in various forms" (cited in Mahony 1998:42, 43).[2] The same verbal root √*mā*, common to *pramā*, *pratimā*, and *māyā*, suggests a possible conceptual relation between the terms. Perhaps, the original meaning of *māyā* as "making *pramā* into *pratimā*" has been gradually replaced by "illusion" as the most popular explanation of the divine power to project forms of the *adhidaivata* level into the human realm.

A more general definition of *māyā*, compatible with my own, has been suggested by Gonda: "incomprehensible insight, wisdom, judgment and power enabling its possessor to create something or to do something, ascribed to mighty beings" (Gonda 1959:126). In a reference to the above quoted-verse from the ṚV 6.47.18, Gonda explains that "*māyā* here refers to the special ability to create forms, or rather to the inexplicable power of a High Being to assume forms, to project itself into externality, to assume

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[1] It should be noted, however, that in Vedic literature, the terms are often used interchangeably.
[2] *rūpaṁ-rupam pratirūpo babhūva tad asya rūpam praticakṣaṇāya/indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate yuktā hy asya harayaḥ śatā daśa//*, ṚV 6.47.18.

an outward appearance, to appear in, or as, the phenomenal world" (Gonda 1959:128). Further,

> it is perfectly intelligible that this text could be quoted in order to demonstrate that the universe is identity gone into difference, God being the inner ground, the basis of identity, the world the outer manifestation of his being; in order to maintain the opinion that all and everything is a self-revelation, a manifestation, a particularization of the one and sole divine essence. As soon as this doctrine is firmly established *māyā* may become the mysterious and inexplicable power which screens the One under the mirage of individuality and under the display of the perishable universe; then it is the very energy of the One which enables it, or him, to project or "realize" itself. (Gonda 1959:128–129)

I suggest calling the fourfold scheme of *pramā-pratimā-nidāna-māyā* the *general condition of phenomenal representation* (GCPR). Each of the components of this scheme must be present to make any act of phenomenal representation possible. The actual content of each of the variables may be contested. For the early Vedic thinkers, *pramā* usually refers to the forms of the divine realm (*adhidaivata*), *pratimā* to their sacrificial counterparts (*adhiyajña*), and *nidāna* is the resemblance between the two (*sāmānya*). *Māyā* refers to the proper sacrificial performance making this resemblance possible. The innovation found in the *upaniṣadic* texts is that the *pramā* becomes the cosmic totality (*brahman*), the *pratimā* is its counterpart within the human experience (*ātman*), and the *nidāna* is the absolute identity (*ekatva*) between the two. *Māyā* is the power of illusion creating the appearance of separateness.

The words *pramā* and *pratimā* are based on the verbal root √*mā*, literarily meaning "to measure." In later Indian philosophical traditions, the basic epistemological concepts are also based on this root, such as *pramā* (cognition), *pramāṇa* (the means of cognition), *prameya* (the object of cognition), *pramātṛ* (the cognizing subject). It is possible that the word *pramā*, which in the Vedic context meant "noumenal prototype" becomes in a more epistemologically precise terminology "cognition of a noumenal prototype," whereas noumenal prototype becomes more closely associated with *prameya* (the object of cognition).

Pramā-pratimā-nidāna-māyā is a formal ontological scheme describing the relation between the phenomenal reality and its noumenal source.[3] At

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[3] This model is also relevant to the representational model of representandum-representatum relation, which will serve me in the last chapter.

the same time, it has an epistemological aspect in that true knowledge is defined by properly understanding all the constituents of the condition of phenomenal representation.

1.1.3 The General Condition of Phenomenal Formation (GCPF)

Rūpa-pratirūpa-nidāna-rūpaṇa, on the other hand, can be seen as *the general condition of phenomenal formation* (GCPF), or appearance of distinct forms in the phenomenal realm. Any phenomenon of formation requires the formal cause (*rūpa*),[4] the formal effect (*pratirūpa*),[5] the persisting relation between the two (*nidāna*), and the efficient cause of formation (*rūpaṇa*). I am not familiar with any explicit usage of *rūpaṇa* in any similar context, but in analogy with *māyā*, I suggest the term as describing a process by which the formal prototype appears as a particular phenomenal image.

The difference between GCPR and GCPF is a matter of accent. GCPR focuses on the correspondences between the noumenal and the phenomenal realities, and thus has an epistemological aspect. GCPF describes the process of formation, and is, essentially, a theory of formal-efficient causality. The referents of each of the schemas may coincide, but the conceptual emphases are slightly different.

Since the analogy of an image-making may take different forms, the image-making metaphysics of representation appears in different ways. The image of the prototype can be created through the act of art, through casting a shadow, through leaving traces, or through the reflection in a mirror. Thus, the grounds for the future models of reflection based on identity between the prototype and the image (e.g., *bimba-pratibimba-ekatva-avidyā*) have already been prepared by the early Vedic schemes of *pramā-pratimā-nidāna-māyā* and *rūpa-pratirūpa-nidāna-rūpaṇa*.

The early Vedic theory of resemblances proposes an explanation for the formation of images in the phenomenal realm. The forms found in the divine realm are regarded as prototypes represented in the phenomenal realm as images resembling the original forms. There are correspondences between the divine forms and phenomenal images, but they are not identical.

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[4] Or *imago imaginans* suggested by Coomaraswamy (1936:51).
[5] Or *imago imaginata* (ibid.).

The transition to the metaphysics of identity in the *Upaniṣads* allows for the transformation of the prototype-image model into the prototype-reflection paradigm, according to which the two correspondences are identical, although the prototype is real, but the reflection is not.

An important implication of the general condition of phenomenal formation is that there must be a clearly distinguished duality—at least on a conceptual level—between the realm in which prototypes reside and the realm of representations. Whereas the latter world is filled with projections and representations of the former world, it requires a distinct phenomenal embodiment.

1.2 The Mirror Model of Consciousness in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad

In this section, I will discuss the early mirror model of consciousness from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (seventh to sixth century BCE),[6,7] taught by the creator-god Prajāpati to Indra, the king of gods; and Virocana, the king of demons. Prajāpati maintains that *ātman* is found beyond the form-counterform correspondences, thus rejecting the possibility that the self, associated with consciousness, is either the noumenal prototype or the phenomenal image. Or, put differently in the new terminology of mirror reflection, the self is neither a reflection nor a reflected thing; by implication, it is that in which all phenomena are reflected.

Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.7–8.12 recounts that Indra, the king of gods; and Virocana, the king of demons, come to Prajāpati to learn about the self. They seek that self, that is, *ātman* "that is free from evils, free from old age and death, free from sorrow, free from hunger and thirst; the self whose desires and intentions are real." Anyone who discovers and perceives the referent of this definition obtains all the worlds and all his desires are fulfilled (Olivelle 2008:171).[8]

Only after thirty-two years, living as celibate students under Prajāpati, Indra and Virocana get to hear Prajāpati's answer. "This person that one sees

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[6] This section is partially based on my article "Is Brahman a Person or a Self? Competing Theories in the Upaniṣads" (2019), used with the permission of Springer Nature.

[7] I am following the dating of the text in Olivelle 2008:xxxvi.

[8] *ya ātmā apahatapāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso 'pipāsaḥ satyakāmaḥ satyasaṃkalpaḥ so 'nveṣṭavyaḥ sa vijijñāsitavyaḥ | sa sarvāṃś ca lokān āpnoti sarvāṃś ca kāmān yas tam ātmānam anuvidya vijānāti iti ha prajāpatir uvāca//*, ChU 8.7.1.

here in the eye—that is the self"—says Prajāpati (Olivelle 2008:171).[9] In his commentary on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, Śaṅkara explains that Prajāpati has in mind the "seer," the subject of perceptual experience (ChUBh on CU 8.7.4). Prajāpati's gesture might also be interpreted in the light of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 2.3.5, where the eye is explained to be the essence of the body, corresponding to the self which is the essence of the "formless" in the body. Either way, Prajāpati's two students fail to understand their teacher's intention and mistakenly take the self to be each of their own reflections in the pupil of Prajāpati's eye. They ask him who the person reflected in the water and in the mirror is, and Prajāpati answers that it is the same person (ChU 8.7.4).

Now Prajāpati asks his two students to look into a pan of water and tell what they *do not* see about themselves. Virocana understands that his physical body is the self; Indra thinks that the self is the reflection of his body (according to Śaṅkara's interpretation) (CUBh on ChU 8.9.1). Prajāpati's experiment is further complicated when he asks his students to adorn themselves beautifully, dress well, spruce up, and then look into the pan of water again. The two proclaim that "as the two of us here are beautifully adorned, well dressed, and all spruced-up, in exactly the same way are these, sir, beautifully adorned, well dressed, and all spruced-up."[10] Prajāpati confirms that this is the self that his students are looking for (ChU 8.8.1–5; Olivelle 2008:172).

Virocana leaves satisfied with his mistaken understanding of the self as a physical body. Indra, however, doubts that his understanding of the self as a reflection really corresponds to the definition of the self as free from old age and death. His doubts are addressed by Prajāpati by further identification of the self with "the one who goes happily about in a dream" (Olivelle 2008:173).[11] After Indra points out that the dreaming person still may experience suffering, and thus does not seem to conform to Prajāpati's definition of the self, Prajāpati suggests waiting for another thirty-two years (ChU 8.10.1–4).

After thirty-two years, Prajāpati tells Indra that the self is the one found in a deep dreamless sleep. Indra is satisfied with this answer, but on his way to the gods, he understands that there is a problem with the unconscious

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[9] *tau ha prajāpatir uvāca ya eṣo 'kṣiṇi puruṣo dṛṣyata eṣa ātmeti hovāca/*, ChU 8.7.4.
[10] *tau hocatur yathā eva idam āvāṃ bhagavaḥ sādhu alaṃkṛtau suvasanau pariṣkṛtau sva evam eva imau bhagavaḥ sādhu allaṃkṛtau suvasanau pariṣkṛtāv iti/*, ChU 8.8.3.
[11] *ya eṣa svapne mahīyamānaś caraty eṣa ātma iti hovāca/*, ChU 8.10.1.

self, which is not capable of perceiving itself as "I am this." Prajāpati affirms Indra's doubts, and proposes waiting "only" five years for his final answer (ChU 8.11.1–3).

After the last five years, Prajāpati gives an elaborate answer: the self is bodiless, and thus is free from all suffering associated with the embodied existence. In order to illustrate the nature of the self, Prajāpati mentions analogies of air, clouds, lightning, and thunder, whose forms are invisible during the winter dry season, and are blurred by the presence of space (*akāśa*), in which they are hidden. When the hot rainy season arrives, these natural phenomena arise from space, and, due to the sun's light and heat, each of them appears in its own true form (ChU 8.12.1; ChUBh on ChU 8.12.1). Similarly, when the self leaves the body, it reaches the highest light and appears in its true form as the "highest person," who "roams about there, laughing, playing, and enjoying himself with women, carriages, or relatives, without remembering the appendage that is this body" (Olivelle 2008:175).[12]

The self is also the experiencer of the sense-faculties and the faculty of thinking:

> Now, when this sight here gazes into space, that is the seeing person, the faculty of sight enables one to see [. . .] The one who is aware: "Let me think about this"—that is the self; the mind (*manas*) is his divine faculty of sight. This very self rejoices as it perceives with his mind, with that divine sight, these objects of desire found in the world of *brahman*. (Olivelle 2008:175)[13]

The story ends here, and Indra raises no further objections.

There are two possible ways to reconstruct Prajāpati's argument about the self. One interpretation is suggested by the anonymous opponent in Śaṅkara's *Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*. After each of Prajāpati's explanations, Indra and Virocana misidentify the self with what is not the self—the body, the reflected image, the dreaming person, etc. Taken separately, none of Prajāpati's examples points to a self. However, taken together, they progressively lead the student toward the true self. The author of this interpretation compares

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[12] *sa tatra paryeti jakṣat krīḍan ramamāṇaḥ strībhir vā yānair vā jñātibhir vā na upajanaṃ smaran idaṃ śarīram/*, ChU 8.12.3.

[13] *atha yatra etad ākāśam anuviṣaṇṇaṃ cakṣuḥ sa cākṣuṣaḥ puruṣo darśanāya cakṣuḥ/ atha yo veda idaṃ jighrāṇīti sa ātmā gandhāya ghrāṇam/ atha yo veda idam abhivyāharāṇi iti sa ātmā abhivyāhārāya vāk/ atha yo veda idaṃ śṛṇvāni iti sa ātmā śravaṇāya śrotram/ atha yo veda idaṃ manvāni iti sa ātmā/ mano 'sya daivaṃ cakṣuḥ/ sa vā eṣa etena daivena cakṣuṣā manasā etān kāmān paśyan ramate ya ete brahmaloke//*, ChU 8.12.4–5.

Prajāpati to a person pointing at the moon for the sake of another person who cannot immediately see it. First, the person points to a nearby tree in the direction of the moon, next to the peak of the high mountain, and finally to the moon itself (ChUBh on ChU 8.12.1).[14]

Śaṅkara provides an alternative interpretation, according to which all of Prajāpati's examples and explanations refer to the same self. Śaṅkara denies any possibility that Prajāpati—the ideal *guru*—may mislead his students at any stage, even for didactic purposes. If Prajāpati claims that the self is found in all the presented cases, this must be so. Each of the cases reveals a different aspect of the self, and taken together, they provide a complete explanation of the self.

Śaṅkara's interpretation seems more plausible to me. There is no reason to assume that Prajāpati lies at any point, because all instances of self-misidentification arise due to his student's misunderstanding. There is no evidence of intentional deception by Prajāpati, and each of his answers can be interpreted as rightly pointing toward the real self.

To make sense of Prajāpati's various definitions of the self, I suggest beginning from his last definition, as presumably this is his final answer, against which no new objections are being raised. From this answer, we learn that the self is independent of the physical body, which is mortal and the object of suffering. This bodiless self is the highest person (*uttama puruṣa*), and as such must be contrasted with other "persons" mistakenly taken by Indra and Virocana to be the self (the person in the eye, in the mirror, in water, etc.).

I. *The self may leave the body during deep dreamless sleep*. The prevalent view among the traditional and modern interpreters of the story has been that Prajāpati, in his last definition of the self as free from the body, describes a fourth state of the self (*turīya*), distinct from the previous three states of wakefulness, dream state, and deep dreamless sleep state. This interpretation has been suggested by Śaṅkara (ChUBh on ChU 8.12.1) and discussed by Daniel Raveh (2008:319–332). Both seem to identify this fourth state with liberation, or with spiritual transcendence of the ordinary states.

There are good reasons, however, to read the passage describing the bodiless self as referring to a state of deep dreamless sleep. First, the self is described as "this deeply serene one," which "after he rises up from this body

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[14] In contemporary scholarship, Ganeri and Black seem to follow this interpretation in general (Ganeri 2007:17–19; Black 2007:41–44). Notice that although Śaṅkara denies that this didactic method should be ascribed to Prajāpati, he confirms the method itself as legitimate elsewhere (see BSBh on BS 1.1.8).

and reaches the highest light, emerges in his own true appearance" (Olivelle 2008:175).[15] The "deeply serene one" (*samprasāda*) is a very insignificant variation of the word *samprasanna* having the same meaning and describing a person immersed in deep dreamless sleep in ChU 8.11.1.

Second, the clue for understanding this verse is found in ChU 8.3.4, immediately preceding the story of Indra and Virocana. This passage describes the world of *brahman* found in one's heart, which is compared to a hidden treasure of gold, over which ignorant people pass every day (ChU 8.3.2). Śaṅkara interprets this passage—and I think he is right—in the sense that people go to the world of *brahman* every night during deep dreamless sleep (ChUBh on ChU 8.3.2.). The self, located in one's heart, during deep sleep "slips" into the veins connecting the heart with the light of the sun. Although not stated explicitly, the passages 8.1.1–8.6.6 (especially 8.3.2 and 8.6.1–5) strongly suggest that during deep dreamless sleep, ignorant people remain inside the veins, which potentially could lead them to all the pleasures of the world of *brahman* and out to the sun. The people who are aware of this treasure "go to the heavenly world every day" (Olivelle 2008:169).[16]

In our story, there is no indication that the highest person leaves the body during some special *turīya* state, and it is most reasonable to assume that Prajāpati's discussion of the free disembodied state of the self is continuous with his previous discussion of the deep dreamless sleep state. While the self ordinarily dwells in one's heart, those who know the nature of the self may leave the body during deep dreamless sleep and go to the sun, "the highest light."

II. *The self is conscious and cannot become unconscious during deep dreamless sleep state.* Prajāpati rejects the view that the self has a human form (as in Bālakī's theory of persons from the BU and KṣU).[17] Instead, he argues that the self has a nature of consciousness; it is a cognizing subject, as described in the ChU 8.12.4–5 ("the seeing person," etc.).

The problem arises when we consider the state of deep dreamless sleep, during which the self appears to be unconscious. In the BU 2.1.18, the king

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[15] *evam eva eṣa samprasādo 'smāc charīrāt samutthāya paraṃ jyotir upasaṃpadya svena rūpeṇa abhiniṣpadyate/*, ChU 8.12.3.

[16] *atha ye ca asya iha jīvā ye ca pretā yac ca anyad icchan na labhate sarvaṃ tad atra gatvā vindate/ atra hy asya ete satyāḥ kāmā anṛta apidhānāḥ/ tad yathā api hiraṇyanidhiṃ nihitam akṣetrajñā upary upari sañcaranto na vindeyuḥ/ evam eva imāḥ sarvāḥ prajā ahar ahar gacchantya etaṃ brahmalokaṃ na vindanty anṛtena hi pratyūḍhāḥ// sa vā eṣa ātmā hṛdi | tasya etad eva niruktaṃ hṛdy ayam iti tasmād hṛdayam | ahar ahar vā evaṃvit svargaṃ lokam eti//*, ChU 8.3.2–3.

[17] On the theory of *puruṣa* in the Upaniṣads, see Shevchenko 2019.

Ajātaśatru argues that during deep dreamless sleep, the self withdraws its cognitive functions and "rests oblivious to everything, just as a young man, a great king, or an eminent Brahmin remains oblivious to everything at the height of sexual bliss" (Olivelle 2008:26).[18] Indra, however, realizes that the unconscious self, who has no knowledge "I am this" cannot be the self (ChU 8.11.1). Implicitly he criticizes Ajātaśatru's theory and points out that the self "oblivious to everything" is not the self, as it is oblivious even to its own existence and thus may be said not to exist at all. How that which is conscious can have no consciousness?

On the other hand, Prajāpati explicitly states that "when one is fast asleep, totally collected and serene, and sees no dreams—that is the self; that is the immortal; that is the one free from fear; that is *brahman*" (Olivelle 2008:174).[19] Does Prajāpati lie? As we know, the self may go to the *brahman* world every night. The body is unconscious, but the self is not identified with the body, and in fact may leave the body to the sun. Prajāpati speaks about this bodiless conscious *puruṣa*, while Indra falsely takes the self to be the unconscious sleeping body.

III. *The self may be identified only with positive dream experiences.* In general, Prajāpati is in agreement with Ajātaśatru's account of the dream state (ChU 8.10.1; BU 2.1.17–18). Both identify the self with the person experiencing itself in a dream. However, Indra raises an objection to the idea that the self free from fear and suffering may undergo various negative dream experiences, such as fear and even death (ChU 8.10.1–2).

Indra's objection is raised against the unqualified attribution of dream states to the self, such as Ajātaśatru's description of the self as "going about in a dream" (*svapnāyā carati*). It should be noticed that Prajāpati slightly but significantly modifies Ajātaśatru's description of the dreaming self to "the one who goes about *happily* in a dream" (*svapne mahīyamānaś carati*) (ChU 8.10.1). In other words, Prajāpati associates the self with positive dream experiences, which are in line with his final definition of the self as the highest person who "roams about there, laughing, playing, and enjoying himself with women, carriages, or relatives, without remembering the appendage that is

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[18] *atha yadā suṣupto bhavati | yadā na kasya cana veda | hitā nāma nādyo dvāsaptatiḥ sahasrāṇi hṛdayāt purītatam abhipratiṣṭhante | tābhiḥ pratyavasṛpya purītati śete | sa yathā kumāro vā mahārājo vā mahābrāhmaṇo vātighnīm ānandasya gatvā śayīta | evam evaiṣa etac chete//*, BU 2.1.18.
[19] *tad yatra etat suptaḥ samastaḥ saṃprasannaḥ svapnaṃ na vijānāty eṣa ātmā iti ha uvāca | etad amṛtam abhayam etad brahmeti/*, ChU 8.11.1.

this body" (Olivelle 2008:175).[20] This self, the knowledge of which allows one to fulfill all of one's desires, is the self whose dream states consist of fulfillment of desires. Indra, however, confuses this self with another "dreaming person," who might experience all kinds of frustrations and pain.

IV. *The self is a non-reflectable seer. It may imitate embodied pursuit of desires on a mental level.* Indra's and Virocana's false conclusion following Prajāpati's first teaching is that the self is identical with the body, and that it involves a certain relation with the reflection of the body (ChU 8.7.4–8.9.2). When Prajāpati teaches that the self is the person seen in the eye, he points to the seer, the subject of experience, described in Prajāpati's final teaching as the "seeing person" (*cākṣuṣaḥ puruṣaḥ*) (ChU 8.12.4). His students, however, falsely take the person in the eye to be the reflection of their bodies in the pupil of their teacher's eye. When they ask, "who is the one that is seen here in the water and here in a mirror?," they mean other reflections of their bodies— the person in the mirror and the person in the water. When Prajāpati answers that "it is the same one who is seen in all these surfaces (*sarveṣu anteṣu*)"— the students understand that the persons in the mirror, the eye, and the water are all reflections of the chief person—the person in the body, which must be the self. Since Prajāpati has in mind the seer, and not the seen body, *sarveṣu anteṣu* must refer not to the mirror, the eye, and the water, but to the "insides" of the bodies.[21] It is not clear whether Prajāpati postulates plurality of selves or one self "reflected" in many bodies. If the former, then all individual seers must be of the same kind of self.[22] If the latter, all seers would share one and the same selfhood.[23]

Further, after Prajāpati directs his students to look at their reflections in the water, he asks them what they *do not* perceive about themselves. The students say that they *see* themselves in a complete correspondence (*pratirūpa*) between their bodies and the persons in the waters. Thus, they apply a theory of correspondences between persons and their reflections, implying that the self—their physical body—is the formal prototype. Prajāpati, however, had asked them about what they *did not* perceive about themselves, hinting that the self is the person, which is not reflected, that is, bodiless consciousness. The relation of duplication, or reflection, is applicable only to the lower

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[20] *sa tatra paryeti jakṣat krīḍan ramamāṇaḥ strībhir vā yānair vā jñātibhir vā na upajanaṃ smaran idaṃ śarīram/*, ChU 8.12.3.

[21] This is exactly how Jha translates *anteṣu* (1942:450).

[22] Which would agree with Viśiṣṭādvaita doctrine of qualitatively identical but separate selves.

[23] Which would be in line with the Advaita doctrine of the ultimate identity and indistinctness of all selves.

persons. Therefore, the highest person does not serve as a prototype, but as that which has no form and does not produce counterimages.

Further Prajāpati orders his students to adorn themselves, dress well, and spruce up, look into a pan of water, and say what they *do perceive* about themselves. The students do as he says and respond: "as the two of us here are beautifully adorned, well dressed, and all spruced up, in exactly the same way are these, sir, beautifully adorned, well dressed, and all spruced up" (Olivelle 2008:172; ChU 8.8.2–3).[24] Surprisingly, Prajāpati seems to mislead his students by affirming their mistake: "that is the self; that is the immortal," etc. (ChU 8.8.3). The only way his words can be accepted as true is that the self shares with the bodies the capacity for enjoying the objects which do not essentially belong to it. This explanation would be compatible with Prajāpati's final teaching, in which the self, in its disembodied form, achieves the objects of desire in the world of *brahman* (ChU 8.12.3–7). Indra understands that while the body and its reflection may be beautifully adorned, they may be injured or extinguished (ChU 8.9.1). The self, however, enjoys all desirable experiences without undergoing the painful ones.

For Prajāpati, the self is not pure subject, "free" from objects. It enjoys objects, but these objects are mental prototypes of physical objects. Throughout the eighth chapter of the ChU, the distinction is made between the real desires of the self—which are always fulfilled, once a person knows this self—and the unreal desires, the desires of the sensual world, which are never completely satisfied (ChU 8.1.4–8.2, 8.3.1, 8.7.1, 8.12.3–6). Through its association with the mind (*manas*) described as the self's "divine sight" (*daivaṃ cakṣuḥ*), the self is capable of roaming about in the realm of *brahman*, "laughing, playing, and enjoying himself with women, carriages, or relatives, without remembering the appendage that is this body" (ChU 8.14.3, 8.14.5).[25] There is nothing particularly spiritual about the real desires of the self; they do not look different from our ordinary sensual desires. The only difference is that being the direct objects of the mind, not obstructed by the gross physical reality, they become immediately attainable.

Śaṅkara dismisses the promise of fulfilled desires as reserved for people of "dull intellect" intended to motivate them to search for *brahman* without qualities (ChUBh on ChU 8.1.1). Nevertheless, Prajāpati's teaching

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[24] *tau hocatur yathā eva idam āvāṃ bhagavaḥ sādhvalaṃkṛtau suvasanau pariṣkṛtau sva evam eva imau bhagavaḥ sādhvallaṃkṛtau suvasanau pariṣkṛtāv iti/*, ChU 8.8.3.

[25] It should be noted that in some sources (e.g., ŚB 10.5.3.3, 3.8.3.8), the *ātman* is considered a substantiation of the *manas* or even *manas* itself.

intentionally attempts to preserve all the attractive features of a theory of selfhood, in which the relation of subject-object in the form of desire is not abandoned. Desires are not to be completely extinguished as preached by later traditions of Buddhism and Yoga. Desires should be merely withdrawn from the phenomenal reality into the mental realms of *brahman*.

The story does not simply strive to present the most precise description of the self, but rather seeks the most attractive form of selfhood. Ordinarily, what we mean by the "self" is a broad network of personality traits, identities, cognitive and perceptive functions, memories, one's own body, and the first-person stance. The reason for this broad folk-psychological definition of the self is, perhaps, the pragmatical advantage of using the same term for a densely interconnected system, which functions well as a whole and is well distinguished from other similar self-systems. However, the project of narrowing down the definition of the self, pursued in many parts of the *Upaniṣads*, is driven by the idea that the conventional broad definition includes elements, which impose on the essential core of selfhood undesirable elements. Whereas some theories of selfhood (such as Uddālaka Āruṇi's teachings from the ChU 6) attempt to single out the most basic and simple "seed" of selfhood, others—and Prajāpati's theory is among them—seek to preserve a combination of attractive properties of the self and eliminate the undesirable features. At the same time, the search for the most apt definition of the self is not merely a theoretical exercise. The assumption of the Upaniṣadic teachers is that it is possible to dissociate, in practice, the most desirable features of the self ("the self whose desires are real") from all the rest (old age and death, sorrow, etc.), thereby making the self immune to the impact of pain, death, fear, and other negative experiences.

Today, we have strong empirical grounds, supporting the claim that some parts of the conventional self can be suppressed or completely eliminated, whereas other components may continue functioning independently. Thus, experienced meditators report that during deep meditative states, the awareness of bodily self situated in time and space disappears, along with the sense of subjectivity, intentionality, and other phenomenal characteristics usually associated with the self. During these states, selfhood seems to consist in pure awareness (Metzinger 2020:7–19). Such manifestation of the self as pure awareness, however, is restricted to deep meditative absorption and, after the meditation period, the self resumes its ordinary functions. There is, however, a rich clinical literature, reporting complete loss of self-components, as a result of accidents, medical conditions, psychiatric disorders, or rare

syndromes. For example, in schizophrenia, certain thoughts may be experienced as alien invasions into one's mind—that is, they are not integrated into what constitutes the conventional self. Some kinds of depersonalization disorders are characterized by the inability to experience the body as one's own and by the loss of volitional agency (Metzinger 2003:437–461).

Usually, the pathological cases of the loss of aspects of the conventional self cause great suffering and hardly can be considered as "the self you should seek." Prajāpati's self-model is an attempt to construct a self, which does not suffer. It is a self, whose dreams and desires come true as it happens in our ordinary wish-fulfilling dreams, the self who is free from the bondage of the body and from the pain-inflicting aspects of the conventional self.

Prajāpati's theory of the self's non-reflectability becomes a fruitful ground for the future speculations regarding the ability of the self to reflect and be reflected in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta alike. The reflection of the seen body in the seer, as exemplified in Prajāpati's "person in the eye," bears resemblances to an explanation of the seer falsely taken to be an instrument of seeing due to the reflection of the later in the former. In Advaita, the example of the same person reflected in different surfaces becomes an analogy for one self, reflected in multiple individual bodies. Whereas in the story of Indra and Virocana the analogy of the reflectable bodies being the self is false, later theories of reflection take the analogy to be proper.

The contrast between the self's non-reflectability and the self's nature as the experiencer of mental objects of desire also anticipates later Sāṃkhya and Yoga theories of consciousness as a reflecting entity, illusorily assuming the forms of mental representations. Prajāpati's experiments with reflecting surfaces can be interpreted as pointing to the reflecting nature of the real self. While it is formless, it is constantly misrecognized for the forms it reflects.

Prajāpati establishes a clear hierarchy between the highest person—the conscious self—and the lower "selves," which include human bodies. He makes it clear that reflectability may be ascribed only to the lower selves, because the self has no form to be reflected. The source of human misery is the misidentification of the highest person with the lower persons, while the realization of the highest person as a distinct entity leads to the fulfillment of all desires.

It should also be noticed that for Prajāpati, the self is not the source of all phenomena. Some Upaniṣadic models of emanation of the world from the self have the disadvantage that not only neutral and positive manifestations of the phenomenal reality, but also the negative ones associated with fear

and suffering, are potentially contained within the self "made of consciousness." Prajāpati makes it clear that the self is distinct from all the phenomenal selves, as well as from all sources of fear and suffering. On the other hand, as the subject of experience, the self "reflects" rather than "sends forth" the phenomenal contents of all kinds. Whereas the painful elements of experience are often mistakenly associated with the self, in fact they are merely seen by the seer, heard by the listener, etc.

Another problem avoided in Prajāpati's theory is the difficulty of explaining the arising of the unconscious material reality out of the self, whose nature is consciousness. As in his theory the self is associated with positive mental states, identified with an essential position of a perceiver, the undesirable arising of material objects out of pure cognition does not arise.

To sum up, Prajāpati's self is not a prototype in the realm of noumenal reality, because it has no body and no form. Due to the same reason, nor is it a reflected image, or mental representation. However, as it seems to be misidentified with both prototypes and their counterimages, the self is the formless consciousness, that which reflects all phenomena, without being one of them.

1.3 Mirror Models in Buddhism

The earliest theories of reflection, besides the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, are found in the early Mahāyāna literature. The *Śālistambha Sūtra*, which can be traced back as far as 200 BC (Ross Reat 1993:4), contains the following passage:

> Now, no *dharma* transfers from this world to the other world. Still, there is recognition of karma and fruit on account of the sufficiency of cause and condition. For example, the facial reflection is seen in a clean mirror, but the face does not transfer into the mirror. There is recognition of the face on account of the sufficiency of cause and condition. (*Ārya Śālistambha Sūtra*, quoted in Wayman 1984:137)[26]

The text describes the transfer of a person's properties from one life to the next. Since the majority of Buddhist philosophical traditions reject the

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[26] The Sanskrit reconstructed text can be found in Sastri 1950:16.

continuous existence of the *dharmas*—the fundamental categories, or factors of being, constantly arising and passing away—there is no permanent substance (such as the self) that persists through the process of reincarnation. Just as an appearance of the face in the mirror is only apparent, in the same way, there is no real transmission of the *dharmas* from one life to the next. Rebirth is only a result of certain conditions from the previous life, just like the face in the mirror is a result of certain non-transferable conditions (the presence of the face and of the mirror).

The *Ratnakūṭa* is another early Mahāyāna *sūtra*, translated into Chinese as early as the second century CE (Frauwallner 2010:175). It provides another example of a reflection analogy, anticipating the later Mādhyamika reflection theory: "In the way that an image void of self-existence is seen in a very clean mirror, so Druma, understand these *dharmas*" (*Ratnakūṭa Sūtra, Pitāputrasamāgama*, cited in Wayman 1984:139). In the *Śālistambha Sūtra* it has been shown that the passage of the *dharmas* from this life to the next is similar to the illusory appearance of the face in the mirror. In the *Ratnakūṭa*, the *dharmas* are empty of self-existence, are interdependent and conditioned, although their interaction causes the false notion of distinctly existing persons and things, just like a reflection in a mirror, being perceived as a distinct object, is nothing but an appearance conditioned by the interaction of a prototype and a mirror. Here we see an important step further on the way from a metaphor of reflection to a theory of reflection, since "emptiness of self-existence" is ascribed to reflection. Nothing has been said here about the prototype of reflection, but in so far as the reflection is concerned—it has no self, if the self is understood to be a distinct, unconditioned existence of a particular essence. In Madhyamaka, mirror reflection, along with magic tricks, a firebrand, and other sorts of illusions, comes to be regarded as a standard analogy for the emptiness of all phenomena (Ratié 2017:210; 223, fn. 44).

Nāgārjuna (200 CE), the central philosopher of the Madhyamaka school, draws upon the above quote from the *Ratnakūṭa* and formulates the first Buddhist theory of reflection:

> With recourse to a mirror, one sees the reflected image of one's face, but in reality this (reflection) is nothing at all. In the same way, with recourse to the personal aggregates, the idea of self [*ahaṃkāra*] is conceived, but in reality it is nothing at all, like the reflection of one's face.
>
> Without recourse to a mirror, one does not see the reflected image of one's face. Likewise, without recourse to the personal aggregates, one does

not speak of a self. Having learned the meaning this way, the noble Ānanda gained the *dharma*-eye and himself repeatedly spoke the same to the monks. (cited in Wayman 1984:139)[27]

Quite in line with the later theories of reflection in Sāmkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta, the *ahaṃkāra* is identified here with reflection. Wayman's translation of the term as "the idea of self" is highly appropriate, especially if the *ahaṃkāra* is interpreted in the light of Buddhist theory of emptiness both of personalities (*pudgala*-s) and of natures (*dharma*-s) (Wayman 1984:139). Buddhists agree that we have some idea of a self, which, however, does not have a real prototype. The basis for the arising of our idea of a self is the five aggregates of personality (*skandhas*)—processes of material conditioning, sensation, ideation, formations, and cognition. However, there is no permanent and stable entity to which mental and physical processes could be attributed.

It is interesting that the fact that a person can see one's own face in the mirror is explained by Nāgārjuna entirely by the presence of the mirror, as if the real face is not a cause of reflection. The aggregates are compared to the mirror, and not to the real face. A subjective factor is entirely absent from Nāgārjuna's account, and it seems that reality is entirely objective. Reflection is an objective illusion caused by a real object, that is, the mirror. Similarly, *ahaṃkāra* is an objective idea of a self, which appears when the aggregates are present. At the same time, for Nāgārjuna, in the liberated state, there is no gaze into the conditioned reality at all. The aggregates conditioning the idea of the self are perceived as illusions, and only emptiness from conditions and from the self is ultimately real. A liberated being is somebody (or nobody) who is not looking into a mirror at all and thus does not see her face—her subjectivity—at all. The face is not a cause of reflection, because there is no face.

Whereas in Madhyamaka the mirror analogy is used to argue that the self has no inherent nature, in Yogācāra it aims at illustrating the ontological

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27 *Yathādarśam upādāya (svamukhapratibimbakam /dṛśya) te nāma tac ca evaṃ na kiṃcid api tattvataḥ //*
      ahaṃkāras tathā skandhānupādāya upalabhyate /na ca kaścit sa tattvena svamukhapratibimbavat //
      yathādarśam anādāya svamukhapratibimbakam /na dṛśyate tathā skandhānanādāya aham ity api //
      evaṃ vidhārthaśravaṇād dharmacakṣur avāptavān /āryānandaḥ svayaṃ caiva bhikṣubhyo 'bhīkṣṇamuktavān // (Ratnāvalī 1.31–34).

status of the external objects of perception. Theories of reflection in the Yogācāra philosophical school continue the tendency to deny any significance to the prototype of reflection (an object reflected in a mirror), which stands for the objects of perception and cognition. While the mind (*citta*) in Yogācāra is commonly compared with a mirror, the tradition's metaphysical postulation of mind only (*vijñaptimātra* or *cittamātra*) bears on the mirror analogy as well. Thus, in the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra* (third century CE), the mind of a meditating practitioner absorbed in *samādhi* is compared to a mirror, in which there is no difference between the reflection and its prototype. In other words, a mind representing an external object is no different from this object (Wayman 1984:134).

It is a matter of dispute in modern scholarship to what extent Yogācāra denies the external reality.[28] What is ultimately real, however, is the mirror (= the mind); the reflected image (=mental re/presentation) has less reality, and whatever is found outside the mirror (=the external source of perception) has the status of what is "imagined" (*parikalpita*). According to Maitreyanātha (300 CE), the contents of the mind are created by the imagined duality of apprehended objects (*grāhya*) and an apprehending subject (grāhaka). These are reflected in the mind without the need to postulate independently existing "external" objects, on the one hand, or "internal" subject, on the other (Frauwallner 2010:317–318). Mirror reflections are commonly invoked in Yogācāra texts, along with dreams, mirages, echoes, etc., to illustrate the unreality of all phenomena and the redundancy in postulating an external support of objects of perception (Ratié 2017:210; 223–224, fn. 47).

Asaṅga (fourth century CE—Frauwallner 2010:346) makes a distinction between two forms of the mind—a "store-consciousness" (*ālayavijñāna*) and "evolving perceptions" (*pravṛttivijñāna*). The store-consciousness is where the contents of evolving perceptions are placed, and the two mind-forms are compared respectively to a mirror and a reflected image (Wayman 1984:134). Again, Asaṅga does not express any need to postulate the existence of the external prototype of the reflected image.

In the absence of the prototype, the cognitive process in Yogācāra is explained in terms of a clear, dusty, or polluted mirror. The pollution is created by our conceptual thinking, which is responsible for the false duality between subject and object (Wayman 1984:132–133). Presumably,

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[28] On the controversy around Yogācāra idealism, see Kellner and Taber 2014.

a liberated mind is free from any pollutions, that is, from reflections. The empty clear mirror reflects only itself—the Buddha nature.

Even the existence of the empty clean mirror of the liberated mind has been later denied by Hui-neng, the sixth patriarch of Chinese Chan Buddhism (seventh–eighth century):

> Bodhi originally has no tree,
> The mirror also has no stand,
> Buddha nature is always clean and pure;
> Where is there room for dust? (cited in Wayman 1984:141)

It is remarkable that while Indian Buddhist philosophers represented the conditioned nature of the self and the external reality by appealing to the analogy of mirror reflection without a prototype, the Chan Buddhists moved to deconstructing the mirror. Thereby, they remained with pure reflectivity, emptiness empty even of itself.[29,30]

1.4 Metaphysical Approaches to Reflection in a Mirror

The metaphysical implications of the Buddhist mirror models are radically different from those of the mirror model in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad.[31] The Buddhist mirror models point to the unreality and the constructed nature of the self and the external world, whereas the ChU reflection theorists hold that the self, the mental contents, and their physical counterparts are all real (or "real behind the real"). The gap between using the same metaphor and coming to diverging conclusions about the features of the target case gave rise to the need to examine more closely the ontology of the optical

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[29] The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who will be discussed further in this book, has alluded—probably—to this verse by describing the "mirror without surface *in which nothing is reflected*" (2014:223, italics in the original). This early description by Lacan seems to capture the essence of a theoretical subject stripped of all of her identities (2006:153).

[30] Another beautiful reframing of the Buddhist mirror analogy can be found in the *Āvataṃsakasūtra*, probably finalized in Central Asia, in the late third or fourth century CE (Gimello 2005:4145–4149)—the fundamental text of the Chinese Hua-yen Buddhism. The text describes the interdependence of all the *dharmas* analogously to the magical net of the god Indra, made of infinite number of jewels, each of which reflects all the rest (Cook 1977:2). In a way, the elementary units of reality both lack their own nature and constitute one another's natures, being both mirrors and reflected images.

[31] This section draws on the excellent summary of the debate on mirror reflection by Isabelle Ratié (2017), as well as on Collette Cox's thorough discussion of perception of nonexisting entities in Sarvāstivāda and Dārṣṭāntika.

phenomenon at the basis of mirror reflection. The exploration of reflection in a mirror has also provided an occasion for various philosophical systems in India to sharpen their positions on the nature of reality and illusion, and consequently on the metaphysics of consciousness, the mind, and the world. Karin Preisendanz insightfully observes that Indian optics did not emerge as a distinct science and has been discussed primarily by philosophers. The questions of optical illusions, such as reflections, are no exception (1989:145).

1.4.1 Sarvāstivādins and Dārṣṭāntikas: The Debate on the Reality of Reflection

These two Abhidharma Buddhist schools held an extensive debate on the epistemological question whether perception could have a nonexistent object.[32,33] The Sarvāstivādins argued that all perceptions require an existent object, whereas the Dārṣṭāntikas admitted that, in certain cases, the object is nonexistent. According to the latter, mistaken cognitions, reflections, echoes, dream images, illusions, magical creations, negative expressions, such as impermanence, and denials are all instances of nonexisting objects and do not have any real object support. Sarvāstivādins, however, insisted that all these cases must have some existent object field (Cox 1988:45).

According to the *Mahāvibhāṣa*, the Dārṣṭāntikas maintain that reflected images are not real because the reflected prototype does not enter the mirror (*Mahāvibhāṣa* 75, p. 390, c.3ff, cited in Cox 1988:53; 82, fn. 107). Vasubandhu (fourth to fifth centuries CE?) provides a few more arguments in the Dārṣṭāntikas's support:

1. Two distinct entities, such as the mirror and the reflected image, cannot coexist in the same locus (AKBh 1967:120, cited in Ratié 2017:208; 218, fn. 14).

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[32] The Dārṣṭāntikas are, probably, the predecessors of the Sautrāntikas, and at a later period it becomes increasingly difficult to distinguish between the two schools (Cox 1988:32).

[33] The texts that present the Sarvāstivādin position are the early Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma, the Vibhāṣa commentaries, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, Saṅghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra*, and the *Abhidharmadīpa*. The primary sources on the Dārṣṭāntika view are the Vibhāṣa commentaries, Saṅghabhadra's *Nyāyānusāra*, and Harivarman's *Tattvasiddhiśāstra*, where similar views are discussed (Cox 1988:32).

2. Several people looking at the same pond of water from different an-
   gles do not see the same reflection in it (AKBh 1967:120, cited in Ratié
   2017:208; 218, fn. 15).
3. The sunlight and the shadow cannot coexist in the same place. Yet one
   can reflect the sun by means of a mirror placed in the shadow (AKBh
   1967:120–121, cited in Ratié 2017:208; 218, fn. 16).
4. The mirror is a flat surface, and yet the reflected moon appears as if in
   its depth (AKBh 1967:121, cited in Ratié 2017:208; 218–219, fn. 17).

Vasubandhu concludes:

> [The existence of the reflection is not established, i.e.] it is not established
> that what [we] call a "reflection" arises while being distinct, [i.e., as] a dis-
> tinct entity. [. . .] As a consequence this [reflection] is nothing at all that
> would exist; but the power of the causal complex (*sāmagrī*) is such that it
> produces an appearance of this sort, for entities have a diversity of powers
> that cannot be fathomed (*acintya*). (Ratié 2007:219, fn. 18–19)[34]

In other words, reflected images are not real because their existence may not
be something over and above the conditioning factors of their arising, such
as the mirror, the light, the position of the observer, etc. The fact that we do
perceive them, after all, leads to the inevitable conclusion that unreal entities
may be the objects of perception.

The Sarvāstivādins' counterargument, presented in the *Mahāvibhāṣa*,
is that reflected images do exist, because they function as conditions
supporting the arising of the perceptual consciousness, and because they are
apprehended by the sense organs. The reflected image should be considered a
real entity, made of a material form derived from the reflected prototype, just
like sound is produced from pressing the lips, teeth, and tongue. Although
in both cases, reflections and sounds are brought into existence in non-
conventional ways, the fact that they give rise to cognitions makes them real
factors (Cox 1988:53).

Saṅghabhadra, Vasubandhu's contemporary (Fukuda 2003:257), presents
a lengthy argument for the existence of reflected images, in his *Nyāyānusāra*.
Being a composite entity, a reflected image exists provisionally, but like all

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[34] *pratibimbaṃ nāmānyad evotpadyate dharmāntaram ity asiddham etat [. . .] ato na asty eva tat
kiṃcit. sāmagryās tu sa tasyās tādṛśaḥ prabhāvo yat tathā darśanaṃ bhavati, acintyo hi dharmāṇāṃ
śaktibhedaḥ* (Ratié 2007:219, n. 18–19).

provisional entities, it has an existing basis. Its basis is the material elements (*mahābhūta*) and derivative material form (*bhautika*). The prototype object generates subtle varieties of the material elements, which reach the mirror to produce the material reflected image (NAS 23, p. 473, a.8ff, cited in Cox 1988:54; 83, fn. 109). Saṅghabhadra further raises the following points:

1. The Dārṣṭāntikas argue that only some nonexistent objects, such as reflected images, are apprehended by perceptual awareness. However, there should be no difference among nonexistent objects, and thus all of them should be admitted as apprehended, which is contradicted by experience.
2. Distinctions in the apprehension of an object as correct or incorrect, as a result of the level of clarity of the sense organ, the distance from the object etc., are only possible in respect to real objects.
3. Vasubandhu's claim that the reflected image has no existence, separately from the causal complex (*sāmagrī*), is false. The causal complex does not exist as a real substance (*dravya*) and cannot have its own particular efficacy. It is more plausible, however, that causal complex—that is, the prototype object and the mirror—produces a separately existing reflected image, because all separately existing conditioned factors arise from causal complexes.
4. The reflected image satisfies the criterion of existence by serving as the object support for the arising of perceptual awareness.
5. Like all existing conditioned factors, a reflected image is apprehended only when it is present, and its presence is dependent upon the causal complex.
6. The perceptual awareness of the reflected image is free from conceptualization, and thus, must be supported by the existing object.
7. Like all material forms, a reflected image can obstruct the arising of another material form (i.e., another reflected image) in the same place (NAS 23, p. 471.b.12ff; p. 472.a.22; p. 472.b.23ff, cited in Cox 1988:54–55;83, fn. 110–112).

The Dārṣṭāntika and the Sarvāstivāda positions on reflected image illustrate two fundamental approaches to the nature of illusion. The former view is that illusion is something which does not exist but is, nevertheless, perceived. The latter view can be characterized as a "non-illusion" view. In other words, the apprehended entity must be real. Appears—therefore, exists.

Utpaladeva, a Śaiva non-dualist philosopher from the tenth century, reports that Sautrāntikas, usually identified with the Dārṣṭāntikas, also apply the reflection analogy to defend the existence of external reality:

> And [consciousness,] which is undifferentiated, cannot be the cause of the "various manifestations"—i.e., [it cannot be the cause] of the fact that it is sometimes manifestation of blue, sometimes manifestation of yellow, [etc.]; because when a cause is undifferentiated, there cannot be any difference in [its] effect. For this reason, the [manifestation] that is "such and such"— [i.e.,] that consists in various [objects] such as blue, yellow, etc. -, [and] that is "[apparently] devoid of cause"—[i.e., we] do not know any cause of it that would be established through perception—leads to infer "an external (*bāhya*) [objective reality]"; [i.e., phenomenal variety leads to inferring the existence of an entity] which causes [the appearance of] its own nature in the form of a reflection (*pratibimba*) within consciousness; [this entity] is similar to its own form [reflected in consciousness]—because it is appropriate [that a reflected object should resemble its reflection] -, it consists in many differences, the forms of which occur successively, [and] it is completely distinct from consciousness. Such is the hypothesis formulated by the externalist. (Ratié 2011:483, fn. 12)[35]

Against the Yogācāra view that postulation of external reality is redundant, the Sautrāntikas utilize the metaphor of mirror reflection to argue that consciousness cannot be the origin of a multitude of mental representations, because it is unitary, just as a mirror cannot be the source of reflected images. Therefore, we must assume the existence of external objects, the form of which is similar to that of their mental representations. As we will see in Chapter 2, Sāṃkhya uses the same argument in the *Yuktidīpikā*, suggesting that its theory of perception and position on external reality are close to Sautrāntika representationalism, where the mind directly perceives only mental representations, which, nevertheless, have as their cause external objects.

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[35] *tasya ca abhinnasya kadācin nīlābhāsatā kadācit pītābhāsatetī ye vicitrābhāsās tatra kāraṇatvaṃ hi yasmān na upapannaṃ hetāv abhinne kāryabhedasya asaṃbhavāt, tasmāt sa ca vicitranīlapītādirūpa ākasmiko 'jñātapratyakṣasiddhahetukaḥ san bāhyaṃ vijñānagatapratibimbātmakajñānāt sarvathā pṛthagbhūtam anumāpayati iti saṃbhāvayate bāhyārthavādī* (ĪPV, vol. I, pp. 166–167; cited in Ratié 2011:483, n. 12).

1.4.2 Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā: The Reflected Image Is Nothing but the Prototype Object

The Naiyāyikas tend to agree with the Dārṣṭāntikas that reflected images are not real. However, whereas the Dārṣṭāntikas argue that the perception of a reflected image is due to the causal complex of supporting conditions, such as the mirror, the prototype object, etc., the Naiyāyikas claim that upon seeing a reflection (*pratibimba*) we see nothing but the prototype object (*bimba*). This theory is based on Nyāya model of visual perception, where invisible rays emanate from the eyes and come into direct contact with the object (Ratié 2007:209). Reflecting substances, such as mirrors and ponds of water, possess a property of clarity (*prasāda*),[36] which is responsible for the resistance of the surface to the eye rays, causing them to bounce back and touch one's face or any other object in front of the reflecting surface. As Uddyotakara (sixth century?) explains, we mistakenly believe that we perceive an image of our face in the mirror because our perception of the mirror and the immediately following perception of our face occur too quickly to realize that these are two different objects in two different places (NV, p. 362–363, cited in Ratié 2007:209; 219, fn. 23).

The Mīmāṃsā position on visual perception and on the perception of reflections is close to that of Nyāya. The only difference is that for the latter, the reflection is due to *prasāda* of the reflecting entity, whereas for the former, it is due to the *light* ray on the mirror's surface, causing the *visual* ray to bounce back (Ratié 2017:209; 219, fn. 25). Curiously enough, Pārthasārathimiśra (who lived at some point between the tenth and the thirteenth century CE) invoked arguments in support of the unreality of the reflected image, which are very close to those of Vasubandhu. These arguments include the impossibility of coexistence of two material things in one locus, the depth of presented image in the flat surface, and different images perceived by the observers found in different positions in respect to the mirror (*Śāstradīpikā*, p. 399, cited in Ratié 2007:209; 220, fn. 27). Nevertheless, his conclusion is substantially different from Vasubandhu's: reflected images are not real because when we perceive them, we apprehend the reflected prototype object (Ratié 2017:209).

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[36] On the debates on *prasāda* in Nyāya, see Preisendanz 1989:193–198.

1.4.3 Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla: The Reflected Image Has No Objective Support

Śāntarakṣita and his disciple Kamalaśīla (both from the eighth century) were two Madhyamaka philosophers, who incorporated the anti-essentialism of Nāgārjuna with the logical-epistemological thought of Dignāga (sixth century) and Dharmakīrti (seventh century), as well as with tenets of Yogācāra (Blumenthal and Apple 2018). According to Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla, reflections are mistaken cognitions (*bhrānti*) and, as such, are nothing at all. They repeat Vasubandhu's arguments of the impossibility of coexistence of two material objects in the same locus, of several observers located in various positions and seeing different things in a mirror, and of the perceived depth of reflected images on a flat mirror (TS 259b–d,260; TSP, Vol. I, p. 133, cited in Ratié 2017:209–210; 220–221, fn. 32–43). They further criticize the Sarvāstivāda view that the reflected image is real, on the grounds that whether the mirror is a permanent entity or the one undergoing change, it can never start bearing the reflected image. If the mirror is permanent, then it cannot be endowed with changing reflections, which would make it impermanent, or, alternatively, the mirror would have to reflect the same image forever.[37] If the mirror is changing, it can never acquire a reflection, because at every moment there arises a different mirror bearing a different reflection. Therefore, to avoid the absurd implication, one ought to accept that the reflected image is illusory (TS 258; TS 261; cited in Ratié 2017:210; 221, fn. 35–36).

The two philosophers also criticize the Nyāya and the Mīmāṃsā view that a reflected image requires an external, objective support (*ālambana*), on the following grounds:

1. The reflected image (*pratibimba*) and the prototype (*bimba*) have different appearances: the reflection of my face in a mirror is located outside my body rather than being a part of it; it faces the opposite direction and has a different size, color, and other properties, due to the peculiar features of the mirror (TS 2586–2589ac; TS 2080, cited in Ratié 2017:210; 222, fn. 38–39).
2. The Mīmāṃsaka Kumārila (sixth century CE?) and his followers deny that a cognition apprehends the object by taking its form; rather the

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[37] See Chapter 2 of the present study on the Sāṃkhya response to this point in the *Yuktidīpikā*.

appearance of the perceived object is an inherent property of the object itself. However, the form of an elephant appearing in a blade, which reflects it, is not the inherent property of the blade. In this case, one sees the form of one thing as a property of another, which contradicts the Mīmāṃsaka doctrine that the cognized form must belong to the apprehended object (TS 252; TSP, vol. I, p.130; cited in Ratié 2017:210; 223, fn. 41).

It should already become clear that optical theories of reflection of various traditions reflect their respective stances on the nature of perceived phenomena. The reality of the prototype object versus the unreality of its reflected image is informed by the direct realism of Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā in respect to the objects of cognition. The radical realism of Sarvāstivāda in respect to all objects of cognition, rejecting the very possibility of nonexistence of anything perceived, dictates the same approach to reflected images. The Dārṣṭāntika representationalism, demarcating between objective conditions and their mental representations, postulates the unreality of reflected images, along the reality of the causal complex at their basis. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla take the Dārṣṭāntika side to defend the unreality of reflected images, but also criticize the realist implications of Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, because they have in view the Yogācāra position of "mind only," where neither the phenomena are real, nor is there a postulation of external reality.

1.4.4 Pratibimbavāda in Kashmiri Śaivism

The popularity of a comparison of consciousness with a mirror in Kashmiri Śaivism is somewhat a paradox. Whereas mirrors passively reproduce images of the external world, consciousness, in this tradition, is a dynamic creative entity, capable of transforming into various phenomena without losing its essence as the eternal unity of being, which is no other but the god Śiva. The Śaiva philosophers are careful to stress that consciousness is *not* like a mirror in that it does not passively reflect an independently existing world. However, it is like a mirror in that it is capable of manifesting diversity while remaining unitary, just as a mirror remains unitary while showing many reflected images (Ratié 2017:211–212).

The analogy of reflection appears in several of Utpaladeva's (c. 925–975 CE) and Abhinavagupta's (c. 970–1025) works, and the two philosophers present

the non-dualistic Śaiva stance on the metaphysics of mirror reflection and on how it bears on the nature of consciousness. First, reflected images are not illusions, because they are not false appearances concealing reality. In case of false cognitions, such as the mistake of perceiving the mother of pearl as silver, or the perception of two moons in the sky, the true cognition is not fully manifested or partially concealed by the false cognition. But in the case of reflection in a mirror, nothing remains veiled or unmanifest. Reflected images do not conceal the mirror—on the contrary—they assist us in understanding that the object in front of us is a mirror. We are also never misled to believe that the reflected prototype, such as my face, has actually entered the mirror. We know that it is only a reflected image (ĪPV, Vol. II, p. 177–178; ĪPVV, Vol. III, p. 242; PSV, p. 37; cited in Ratié 2017:212–213; 227–228, fn. 65–68).

Second, reflected images cannot be reduced to the reflected prototypes. Abhinavagupta criticizes the Nyāya theory of visual rays bouncing back from the surface of mirrors and coming into direct contact with the reflected object. Such a theory cannot be sound because in some cases one can apprehend simultaneously the prototype object and its reflected image (such as holding the mirror on the side of the reflected mountain). Reflected images are not illusions precisely because we are aware of their distinction from the prototype objects (ĪPV, Vol. II, p. 177–178; cited in Ratié 2017:212; 227–228, fn. 65).

Third, the Śaiva non-dualists present an alternative theory of the clarity (*nairmalya* or *svacchatā*) property of reflecting substances and criticize the Nyāya theory of clarity (*prasāda* or *svacchatā*) understood as resistance. Resistance is the property of all material things, such as walls, and if clarity is identical with resistance, then we should be able to see reflected images even by looking at walls. Instead, clarity must be understood as the ability to manifest the reflecting substance as something else while remaining oneself. The paradigmatic case of a perfect *nairmalya* is consciousness, which does not require anything external to itself in order to reflect its form, but is capable of creating forms out of itself, without losing its unitary essence. Mirrors and ponds are less-perfect instantiations of *nairmalya* because they require external objects to reproduce their forms. Thereby Śaiva non-dualists turn the tables and make consciousness the paradigm of reflection rather than the mirrors (*Vivṛti* on ĪPK 1.2.8; TĀ 3.9; TĀV, Vol. II, p. 15; ĪPVV, Vol. III, p. 238; ŚDV, p.14; cited in Ratié 2017:214–215; 230, fn. 77–78; 231, fn. 80; 232, fn. 92–93).

Finally, the reflected images should be considered as real, but not independent from the mirror manifesting them. This ontological dependence constitutes their qualifying property. Reflected images appear to be distinct from the mirror and yet they exist only insofar as they are not separate from it. The ontological status of the phenomenal world is the same: it exists only insofar as consciousness takes on the forms of the perceived objects, and they too appear to be distinct from consciousness, but only because consciousness manifests itself as divided between internal consciousness and the external world (*Tantrasāra*, p. 10; TĀV, Vol. II, p. 65; ĪPVV, Vol. II, p. 81; ĪPVV, Vol. III, p. 239; 343; TĀ 3.52–53; 3.56–57; cited in Ratié 2017:215–217; 232, fn. 92; 232, fn. 94; 233, fn. 97–98).

At this stage, we should have relatively copious contextual material for proceeding to the inquiry of mirror models of consciousness in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta.

2

Consciousness Reflects the Mind, the Mind Reflects Consciousness

Mirror Models in Sāṃkhya and Yoga

It was, perhaps, Prajāpati's experiments with reflecting substances, described in the ChU, which inspired the philosophical traditions of Sāṃkhya and Yoga to develop their own mirror models of consciousness. In the previous chapter, I discussed the factors of Indra's and Virocana's profound misunderstanding of the nature of the self, the primary among which has been their tendency to confuse consciousness with the forms it reflected. The reflection of the seen body in the seer's eyeball—Prajāpati's "person in the eye"—bears a striking resemblance to the Sāṃkhya-Yoga notion of the "seer" falsely taken to be an "instrument of seeing" due to the reflection of the latter in the former.

Sāṃkhya and Yoga developed several theories of reflection in order to account for the illusory contact between two ontologically separate entities—consciousness and the mental faculty. Just like a face is reflected in a mirror, consciousness is reflected in the material basis of perceptive and cognitive processes, and thus the mental faculty appears to be conscious, while consciousness falsely appears to be engaged in mental activity. Or, perhaps, the other way around—according to another theory, it is the mind, which is reflected in consciousness. Or—according to yet another theory—consciousness and the mind both reflect each other.

In order to appreciate, if not to exhaust, the philosophical richness and density of mirror models of consciousness in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, pregnant with epistemic, phenomenological, metaphysical, and soteriological implications, the range of the selected texts is rather broad, starting with Āryadeva's reports from the second to third centuries AD and ending with Vijñānabhikṣu's mutual reflection theory from the sixteenth century. Up to the tenth century, mirror models of consciousness gradually gain currency as the strongest grounds for defending the irreducibility of consciousness to mind against Buddhist reductionists. Vijñānabhikṣu's mutual reflection

theory, on the other hand, re-evaluates the metaphysical conditions for the falsely arising "identity of differents"—to use K.C. Bhattacharyya's coinage—the fundamental misidentification of consciousness as the mind.

Theories of reflection in Sāṃkhya and Yoga fall under four major categories: reflection of external objects in the mental faculty, reflection of consciousness in the mental faculty, reflection of the mental faculty in consciousness, and mutual reflection of consciousness and the mental faculty, while in some cases the categories are interrelated. Reflection theorists design different kinds of models, in order to answer the following questions: What makes the interaction between ontologically separate entities possible? How does phenomenal experience, involving the subject of experience and its objects, arise? How does conscious cognition arise? Why is there a mistaken identification of consciousness with what is not consciousness, that is, with the mental faculty, the physical body, one's family etc.? And how is it possible for consciousness to experience the natural world, without losing its own inherent nature? What is the metaphysical source of the way we speak about ourselves? How can we correct our deeply ingrained mistaken perception of consciousness as inseparable from the mental faculty? The answers to these questions in the light of the four kinds of the mirror models guide the structure of this chapter.

I advance two independent arguments about theories of reflection in Sāṃkhya and Yoga. My first argument is that the mirror models of consciousness in these systems are closely related to theories of mental representation. Based on theories of reflection and perception, I undertake a reconstruction of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga version of representationalism, the understanding of which in modern scholarship remains unsatisfactory, and discuss the relation between consciousness and its mental image. In Sāṃkhya, the source of our idea of the I is the "I-making faculty" (*ahaṃkāra*); in Yoga it is the reflection of consciousness (*puruṣa*). My second argument identifies the concept of *asmitā* (the "I-am-ness," the ego) in Yoga as the central factor of mutual "reflectability" of consciousness and the mind. This argument is a philosophical, rather than historical, incorporation of the apparently distinct theory of *asmitā* into a particular mirror model of consciousness, drawing on Vijñānabhikṣu's commentary, on the one hand, and on modern interpretation by K.C. Bhattacharyya, on the other. Bhattacharyya's creative philosophical interpretation of Sāṃkhya and Yoga is highly insightful but remains largely unknown among contemporary writers on these traditions. As his explorations of *asmitā* and the concept of mirror-like reflection

demonstrate, his work deserves much closer attention than it has attracted so far.

2.1 Sāṃkhya-Yoga Metaphysics

Metaphysical dualism shared by classical Yoga and Sāṃkhya is presented thoroughly, but often aphoristically, in the fundamental texts of the two systems—the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali and the *Sāṃkyakārika* by Īśvarakṛṣṇa—roughly from the same period (fourth century CE). It was up to the commentators to explain, elaborate upon these texts, and defend their arguments against opponents. The main idea that appears in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* pertains to the duality between two fundamental principles underlying reality: *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is the self or pure subjectivity, which is said to illuminate and experience *prakṛti*, the objective world of creation. *Puruṣa* is essentially pure consciousness, unchanging and a-causal. The concept of *prakṛti*, which can be translated as "matter,"[1] refers both to tangible objects, including our own physical bodies, and to the faculties of cognition and perception, the ego, and our psychological drives.[2]

The relationship between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is that of an observer and the observed, in which *prakṛti* becomes active merely due to *puruṣa*'s presence. The proximity between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* causes an erroneous identification between the two, like two nearby trees, which may appear as one tree from a distance (YV 152,16–29). This mistake is the source of *duḥkha*, the everyday phenomenal existence inherently involving suffering. It is said that the end of suffering will be achieved through the isolation (*kaivalya*) of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*. As opposed to the non-dualist system of Advaita Vedānta, Sāṃkhya admits an infinite plurality of individual *puruṣas*.

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[1] Another possible translation is "nature." See Geoffrey Ashton's recent discussion of different translations of *prakṛti*. In his view, "nature" is a preferable translation, as it avoids the widely spread mistake of associating *prakṛti* with the inanimate substance, inspired by Newtonian mechanics, and characterizes it as a kind of organic life (2020:9–15). For my purposes, both meanings are acceptable, as my discussion focuses, primarily, on the interaction between consciousness and "non-consciousness," *prakṛti*'s separateness from *puruṣa*, without getting into the nuances about semantic differences between nature and matter. Moreover, as I interpret an account of *prakṛti* as falling under materialism/naturalism broadly understood, both "matter" and "nature" seem appropriate.

[2] The inclusion of the mental faculty under unconscious "matter" may sound odd, as in contemporary analytic philosophy the mind is not considered unconscious or material, except for eliminativist physicalism or brain-mind identity theory, which are not upheld by Sāṃkhya. Yet the Sāṃkhya peculiar mind-consciousness dualism allows positing everything mental minus consciousness on the same ontological side where the physical properties are found.

Without going too deep into the differences between the two sister systems, Yoga can be characterized as being more of a prescriptive practice-oriented system than Sāṃkhya. Yoga prescribes, as a method of liberation, a gradual meditative effort of active disassociation of the mind from the illusory connection with the self. In my reading of Sāṃkhya, which draws upon K.C. Bhattacharyya, the process of disassociation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* is a natural, spontaneous process, in which the subject's experience of the objective world brings about the ultimate satisfaction needed to end the primordial association between the two.[3]

The mental faculty is the first appearance in the evolution of *prakṛti* in the presence of *puruṣa*. When out of *puruṣa*'s sight, *prakṛti* is nothing but unmanifested undifferentiated potentiality of matter (*pradhāna*). The classical Sāṃkhya theory of the evolution of the elements (*tanmātras*) describes a gradual unfolding of the contents of *prakṛti*, triggered by its contact with the self. The mental faculty arises prior to the sense faculties, and the latter prior to the material elements composing various physical objects. This curious evolution theory is the upside-down version of materialist theories in which the mind arises from matter and resembles Neoplatonic emanation of the sensible realm from the intelligible realm, emanating, in turn, from one undifferentiated unity of the One. It should be pointed out, however, that for Sāṃkhya all *prakṛti*'s evolutes are real, objective, causally interrelated elements governed by the same principles of change and action.

The mental faculty designates three distinct functions commonly referred to as "the internal organ" (*antaḥkaraṇa*). These are the apperceptive faculty (*buddhi*) usually translated as "the intellect," "the I-maker" (*ahaṃkāra*) often translated as "the ego,"[4] and the thinking organ (*manas*) translated as "the mind."[5] In Sāṃkhya, the three are distinct elements evolving one from another. In Yoga, the three are considered as different aspects of the same mental faculty, referred to as the "mental faculty" or "the mind" (*citta*).

The function of the *buddhi* is the ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) of the external objects, as well as of the *puruṣa*'s presence. The *buddhi* assumes the form of things present in its vicinity, but also projects its own subjective states (*bhāvas*) (SK 23; Bhattacharyya 1983:191–192). The *ahaṃkāra* is

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[3] I defend this reading in Shevchenko 2017.

[4] In Yoga, the corresponding term is *asmitā*. I will discuss the differences between *ahaṃkāra* and *asmitā* in the last section of this chapter.

[5] To achieve consistency with literature on Sāṃkhya in English, I will stick to the accepted translations of these terms.

responsible for the sense of self-identity, the sense that I am this or that being, and that I am a conscious agent of my actions (SK 24). The third function—*manas*—the thinking organ—develops along with other sense faculties from the *ahaṃkāra* (SK 27). The first two aspects of the mental faculty—the intellect and the ego—are of particular importance for the discussion of reflection theory, while the rest of *prakṛti*'s evolutes, including *manas*, are less significant.

Theories of reflection are introduced in order to account for the nature of interaction between entirely distinct ontological entities of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.[6] Prior to Vijñānabhikṣu (sixteenth century)—the proponent of a double-reflection theory—there were two major versions of the theory of single reflection: the self's reflection in the mental faculty (usually in the intellect) and the mental faculty's reflection in the self. I will start, however, with the analogy of reflection as applied to the intellect's ability to reflect external objects.

2.2 Reflection in the Mental Faculty

2.2.1 External Objects

The earliest reports of theories of reflection in the intellect (*buddhi*), the primary evolute of *prakṛti*, refer to the intellect's ability to assume the forms of the objects of cognition. Āryadeva, a Madhyamaka philosopher (170–270 AD), mentions this view of the Sāṃkhyas in his *Śataka*:

> The one can have various forms, like crystal. As one crystal becomes blue, yellow, red and white according to the colors (of things near by), just so one *buddhi* becomes various according to its objects. At one time it perceives

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[6] Ashton contests the ontological duality between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as the actual position of the *Sāṃkyakārikā* and interprets *prakṛti* to be a product of the interaction between *puruṣa* and *mūla-prakṛti* (the unmanifest source of the phenomenal world) (2020). As should become clear further, mirror models of consciousness in Sāṃkhya express the idea that the contact between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (or for this matter, *mūla-prakṛti*) is not real, that there can be no real product of the apparent interaction between the two. While the metaphor of reflection is not mentioned in the Sāṃkyakārikā, there is another central metaphor in the text, which suggests that the interaction is not real—the identity between a spectator and the dancing girl in SK 59,64–66. In any case, the later Sāṃkhya philosophers, who expound theories of reflection, make a rather clear ontological distinction between two real substances—*puruṣa* and *prakṛti*—and the interaction between the two, which is unreal.

misery, at another time pleasure and so on. Although *buddhi* has various forms, (actually) there exists only one *buddhi*. (Honda 1974:487[11])[7]

The text describes the intellect's capacity to reflect the forms of external objects. Here, the form of the object, perhaps, designates a distinguishing mark (*viśeṣaṇa*) of the three *guṇas*[8] experienced as pleasure, suffering, or indifference. The quoted proponent of Sāṃkhya explains how the same entity—the intellect—can undergo different states without losing its own distinct nature (*svarūpa*).

The anonymous author of the *Yuktidīpikā* (seventh to eighth centuries) also utilizes the analogy of reflection in order to argue that the intellect does not change as a result of its interaction with external objects. His position is presented in response to the proponent of the Buddhist teaching of momentariness (*kṣaṇika*), who has argued that the intellect must undergo change because it apprehends objects. The author of the *Yuktidīpikā* responds that what changes is the activity of the intellect (*vṛttis*)but not the intellect itself. As the word *vṛtti* is synonymous with *pratyaya*, here it may also stand for the ideas or representations of the external objects. Thus, the sense organs grasping different objects are responsible for the changes in the stream of mental representations of these objects. The author's example is that of the reflection of one's face in the water. If there is any change in the water, it is due to the movement of the water, not due to the reflected image. Just like the reflection does not cause any real change in the water, so the reflected images of apprehended objects do not cause any change in the intellect (YD 190,3–11).

The opponent raises the possibility that the water, having a reflection of a face, is a new entity born from the contact between the face and the water,[9] and thus the analogy implies that the contact between the intellect and the objects causes a new intellect having the property of an apprehended object. The author of the *Yuktidīpikā* responds that neither the face nor the water may be the cause of the emergence of a new entity, that is, the reflected face in the water. The face is not the cause of change in the water because it is located at a distance. The water cannot be the cause because when the face is removed, the reflection also disappears. Were the reflection a new entity

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[7] The original orthography is preserved.

[8] The three *guṇa*s or qualities are the driving forces of *prakṛti*, and they include the *sattva* (illuminating quality), the *rajas* (active quality), and the *tamas* (dark and limiting quality).

[9] As we have seen in section 1.4.1, this position accords well with the Sārvāstivādins' view on reflection as a really existing entity, produced by material factors and capable of giving rise to cognitive awareness.

caused by the contact between the face and the water, we would expect the image of the face to remain in the water even after the removal of the face, just like the red color of the pot remains after the baking is done (YD 190,11–15).

Āryadeva's analogy with reflection in a crystal and the analogy with reflection in the water in the YD—both set in the context of debates with the Buddhists—are intended to demonstrate that the mental faculty possesses permanence and unity, contrary to the Buddhist notion of the mind as a succession of states, arising and passing away incessantly. While not a full-blown justification of the unity of apperception, the analogical cases of reflection are meant to demonstrate the plausibility of the mind's stability underlying the change in the mental states. At the same time, these analogies imply that there is no real causal interaction between the cognizing faculty and the external objects, only an apparent interaction. As it will be shown further, a similar interaction characterizes the contact between the intellect and consciousness. The argument defending the undifferentiated nature of the mind, which is nevertheless capable of reflecting the forms of external reality, presented in *Yuktidīpikā*, is also similar to the Dārṣṭāntika argument, using the mirror metaphor to prove the external reality represented by the undifferentiated mind, which I have described in section 1.4.1. It seems that the author of YD adopts a representationalist position on the nature of external reality and its indirect perception by consciousness, a position close to that of Dārṣṭāntika.

The intellect's capacity to "reflect" the forms of external objects must be understood in the context of theories of perception in Sāṃkhya. I turn now to Sāṃkhya debates on perception, the articulation of which is much more substantial than in Yoga. The definition of perception as a distinct means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) underwent significant changes throughout the history of this system. Vārṣagaṇya (first to second centuries) defined perception (*pratyakṣa*) as "the functioning of the ear and other sense-faculties" (*śrotrādivṛttiḥ*) (YD 76,21). Vindhyavāsin (300–400 AD) offered an amended definition of his predecessor: "perception is the functioning of the ear and other sense-faculties, which is non-conceptual" (*śrotrādivṛttiḥ avikalpikā pratyakṣam*).[10] Contrary to certain Western theories of perception, in which the sense organs are passive receivers of external stimuli, in some Indian theories (including Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita, among others), the sense

[10] Quoted in *Nyāyamañjarī* 93.10, *Sanmatitarkaprakaraṇa* 533.2, *Tattvabodhavidhāyinī*, *Pramāṇamīmāṃsā* 28.4. (The text is quoted in Harzer 2006:72. References are taken from Harzer 2006:124, n. 3.)

functions are active forces that go out, touch upon the external objects, and assume their form. Thus, the early definitions of perception in Sāṃkhya refer to pre-conceptual direct "grasping" (*grahaṇa*) of the objects by the senses, in which the mental faculty does not participate. As Harzer points out, Vārṣagaṇya and Vindhyavāsin understand perception as an essentially non-propositional kind of knowledge (Harzer 2006:75).

Īśvarakṛṣṇa proposes a revised definition of perception as "the ascertainment of each object" (*prativiṣayādhyavasāyo dṛṣṭam*).[11] Further, he specifies that ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) is synonymous with the intellect (*buddhi*) (SK 23). Thus, perception, according to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, takes place in the mental faculty and not in the sense faculties as his predecessors have argued. The author of the YD explains that *adhyavasāya* means "that which follows the functioning of the sense faculties appropriating their sense-content" (*upāttaviṣayendriyavṛttyupanipātī yo 'dhyavasāyaḥ*) (YD 70,12; Harzer 2006:76). The intellect is identified by the author of the YD as *pratyaya*, which I would suggest to translate as "ideation" or "mental representation." The reason for this translation should become clear when *pratyaya* is contrasted with the functioning of the sense faculties, as will be shown immediately.

In SK 28, the function of the sense faculties is described as "merely seeing the form (or color) and the rest" (*rūpādiṣu pañcānām ālocanamātram īṣyate vṛttiḥ*). This "seeing" (*ālocana*) is explained in the YD as "grasping" (*grahaṇa*). It can be further described as "the function of the sense-faculty assuming the form of the object due to its contact with the object."[12] *Pratyaya*, on the other hand, is "the ascertainment such as 'this is a cow,' 'white,' 'it is running' as a result of imitating the function of the sense-faculty towards the object."[13] As long as the contact between the sense faculties and the object persists, the sense faculties come into a direct contact with an object and assume its form as a particular. The intellect reproduces the form of the object grasped by the sense faculty and identifies its properties as universals as in a determination "this is a cow." In other words, the cognitive activity of the mental faculty is propositional, and perception involves conceptualization (Harzer 2006:76–77). By removing the locus of perception from the sense faculties to the mental faculty, Īśvarakṛṣṇa and the author of the YD broaden

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[11] Harzer convincingly suggests that Īśvarakṛṣṇa revises Vindhyavāsin's definition of perception in response to Dignāga's critique (2006:82; 126–127, n. 37). Also see Hattori 1968:60–61.

[12] *viṣayasamparkāt tādrūpyāpattir indriyavṛtti[r] grahaṇam,* YD 203,4–5.

[13] *viṣayendriyavṛttyanukāreṇa niścayo gaurayaṃ śuklo dhāvatīty evamādiḥ pratyayaḥ*, YD 203,5–6. See also YD 188,18–19.

the definition of perception to include the inner states such as intuitive per-
ception of the yogis, emotions, etc. (Harzer 2006:82).

I would like to argue that the revised theory of perception in the SK and
the YD is representationalist in that both the senses and the intellect conform
themselves to the object, perceived not "out there" but within the mind.[14]
Together with the Buddhist Sautrāntika and the Advaita-Vedānta schools, it
is known as the "image theory of perception" (sākāra-jñāna-vāda), that is, the
indirect realist position, according to which, only mental images (ākāra) are
directly perceived, and not objects in themselves (King 1999:159). I believe
the terms "ideation" or "mental representation" applied in Western represen-
tationalism should be the proper rendering of pratyaya. The self perceives ex-
ternal objects by means of their representations, or ideas, which comprise the
intellect. The very possibility of a propositional content in the mental faculty
has as its condition the transformation of particular objects grasped by the
sense faculty into ideas, mental objects analyzable in terms of particularity
and universality. Moreover, the theory of the three guṇas, coupled with the
theory of perception, might suggest that the forms of the objects, appearing
in the mind, represent different configurations of the guṇas, the fundamental
material components of the physical and the mental reality. We do not find
an explicitly stated relation between the theory of perception with the theory
of the guṇas in the SK or the YD, other than describing the act of cognition in
the intellect in terms of the predominance of sattva. Yet Āryadeva's descrip-
tion of the reflected forms in terms of pain and pleasure may point to theories
of reflection as being accounts of mental representations not merely of the
shapes of external objects, but of the elementary constituents of these objects.

Metaphors of reflection play an important role in Sāṃkhya represen-
tationalism, in that they set a model of a prototype (bimba) represented in
the mind as its reflected image (pratibimba). The former can be rendered
as a representandum, the object of representation, and the latter is a
representatum, the concrete internal state carrying information related to
this object.[15] The mental faculty, on this account, plays several functions.

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[14] The representationalism of the Sāṃkhya theory of perception has been also acknowledged by
other scholars. See Jacubczak 2008:241; Harzer 2006:122, n. 150; J.B. Bhattacharya 1965:18; and King
1999:159–160.

[15] To use Metzinger's definition of these terms (2003:20). Curiously enough, the pair bimba-
pratibimba has assumed a nearly identical representational meaning in the writings of East Asian
commentators of Buddhist Yogācāra texts (Muller 2011:1273 [199]), as well as in Tibetan summaries
of the Sautrāntika position (Guenther 1971:85). In the third chapter of the present study, my sug-
gestion to regard bimba-pratibimba as parallel to representandum-representatum will serve me in

First, being permanent, it provides unity of apperception for the multitude of impressions. Second, it transforms the objects of perception into a mental activity (*vṛtti*), incorporating memory, analysis of a representatum in terms of universals and particulars, as well as its propositional structuring. Third, the very presence of the mental faculty demarcates between noumenal reality and the mental representation of this reality. The former is independent of the mind and guided by causal relations, while the latter is merely a reflection, an epiphenomenon.

Does the system of Yoga share Sāṃkhya's representationalist theory of perception? Patañjali mentions perception as a valid means of cognition, without defining it (YS 1.7). The author of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*,[16] however, defines perception very closely to the definition in the YD:

> The modification of the mind (*citta*) which, by being connected with an outside object through the channel of the sense-organs and making that object its own, mainly comprehends the special nature of the object which has general and special characteristics, is the source of correct knowledge (called) perception. (Rukmani 1981:I.59–60)[17]

Here too, perception takes place in the mental faculty, although it does not involve propositional knowledge, as the object is grasped in its particularity. Another evidence of representationalism in Yoga can also be found in the YS 2.20: "The seer is consciousness alone; though pure, he witnesses the intellect (*pratyaya*)" (Rukmani 1981:II.135, amended).[18] While the word *pratyaya* has been used throughout the YS in different senses, including a "cause," here the author of the YSBh identifies *pratyaya* with the intellect (*buddhi*). It is not a coincidence that Patañjali has chosen a word indicating intellect's intentionality to contrast with the pure (*śuddha*) nature of the "seer" (i.e., *puruṣa*). *Puruṣa* sees mental objects, representations of the objects assumed by the intellect.

constructing a theory of mental representation of consciousness, inspired by Sāṃkhya *pratibimbavāda* and informed by contemporary theories of consciousness.

[16] The author of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* is traditionally known as Vyāsa. Some suggestions have been made to ascribe the text to the author of the YS Patañjali, and even to Vindhyavāsin. As no conclusive evidence for the authorship of this text exists, I will be following "the author of the YSBh."

[17] *indriyapraṇālikayā   cittasya   bāhyavastūparāgāt   tadviṣayā   sāmānyaviśeṣātmano'rthasya viśeṣāvadhāraṇapradhānā vṛttiḥ pratyakṣaṃ pramāṇam*, YSBh 25,15–16.

[18] *draṣṭā dṛśimātraḥ śuddho'pi pratyayānupaśya*, YS 2.20.

The analogy of reflection in the mental faculty is also mentioned in the *Yogasūtra*. Patañjali compares the mind (*citta*), absorbed in a meditative state called *samāpatti* to a transparent jewel reflecting the forms of nearby objects. When the fluctuations of the mind stop, the mind is "taking the form of whatever object is placed before it, whether the object be the knower, the instrument of knowledge, or the object of knowledge."[19] In other words, ordinarily, the mind's ability to perceive clearly the objects and the light of consciousness reflected in it is distorted ("colored") by its own activity. When the mind steadily focuses on external objects, on the sense organs, or on the self, it can accurately reflect them. The target case of the analogy of reflection in Yoga is different from that of Sāṃkhya; for the former, the mind is capable of reflection only in a state of intense concentration, while for the latter, the mind reflects external objects in every act of perception. One implication of this difference is that for Patañjali, ordinary perception is perhaps a *pramāṇa*, but it has some way to go to achieve a perfectly clear representation of external objects and the self. Just like the bronze-made mirrors, which required polishing to achieve high levels of reflectivity, the yogis had to purify their minds from *kleśas* to achieve clarity and stability of perceived images.

At this point we might ask whether the mental faculty reflects external objects in the same way as it reflects pure consciousness (*puruṣa*). In other words, should the idea of a self be accounted for as a representation of the external self in the same way as the idea of an object is a representation of an external object? In the following section I will attempt to answer this question from the perspective of Sāṃkhya. I will return to the same question in respect to Yoga in the final section of this chapter after my discussion of the notion of *asmitā*.

2.2.2 The Self

Haribhadrasūri (eighth century) reports two versions of the theory of the self in the mental faculty—the first ascribed to Vindhyavāsin (fourth century), the second—to Āsuri.[20] Thus, Vindhyavāsin argues that:

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[19] *kṣīṇa-vṛtter abhijātasyeva maṇer grahītṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu tat-stha-tad-añjanatā samāpattiḥ*, YS 1.41.

[20] There is little reliable historical information about Āsuri, and it is doubtful whether the quotation can be ascribed to him. See Larson 1987:112.

By means of [sheer] proximity, the Self, the essence of which is un-
changing [consciousness], makes the mind (*manas*), which is devoid of
consciousness (*acetana*), a reflection of itself (*svanirbhāsa*), just as an ad-
junct (*upādhi*), [e.g., a flower, makes] a crystal [a reflection of itself].
(Qvarnström 2012:401, 406)[21]

Vindhyavāsin holds that apprehension takes place in the mind (*manas*), while
other mental faculties (the *buddhi* and *ahaṃkāra*) are its modalities. This is
the reason that for him, the reflection of the self takes place in the mind, and
not in the intellect (Larson 1987:144). It should be noticed that at least in
this quote, there is no indication that *puruṣa* is reflected in the mental fac-
ulty only at particular times, as at the moment of liberation. Nor is there any
explicitly stated connection of reflection with a particular cognitive state of
the mind, such as perception or concentration. What seems to be important
for Vindhyavāsin is that *puruṣa* is unchanging and the mind unconscious.
He invokes the metaphor of reflection in a crystal, in order to illustrate the
apparent mutual transference of their properties. Consciousness appears to
be causally affected, as if modified by a stream of perceived contents, whereas
the mind appears to be conscious. This appearance is an illusion caused by
consciousness reflected in the mind, as if its reflected image has entered in-
side the mind and became intermixed with it. In the reality, however, con-
sciousness and the mind retain their essential properties.

According to the quote ascribed to Āsuri,

[. . .] the highest pleasure (*bhoga*) of the [Self (*puruṣa*)] arises when the
intellect (*buddhi*) has undergone such a change whereby it has become
separated [from the Self, and whereby the Self is reflected in the *buddhi*],
just like the appearance of the reflection of the moon in clear water.
(Qvarnström 2012:401, 406)[22]

In this version, the intellect is said to reflect the self only after the actual sep-
aration between the two has been completed. Thus, the event of reflection
seems to be postponed even further than in the above-mentioned verse from

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[21] *puruṣo 'vikṛtātmaiva svanirbhāsam acetanam/*
    manaḥ karoti sāṃnidhyād upādhiḥ sphaṭikaṃ yathā//, Yogabindu 449, in Qvarnström 2012:406.
[22] *vibhakedṛkpariṇatau buddhau bhogo 'sya kathyate/*
    pratibimbodayaḥ svacche yathā candramaso 'mbhasi// (*Yogabindu* 450, in Qvarnström
2012:406).

YS 1.41, where reflection was taking place during deep concentration but *be-fore* final liberation. It is not entirely clear why the reflection of *puruṣa* appears in the intellect after *kaivalya*, and why an observation of this reflection is said to be highly enjoyable. Perhaps, the author of the quote refers to the state of *jīvanmukti*, described in the SK 66–68, where the separation between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* is completed, although karmic impressions (*saṃskāras*), by the force of inertia, continue to produce physical existence for a while. At that time, *puruṣa* observes its own reflection in the intellect from a safe distance, without being affected by the sorrows of physical reality, experiencing purely aesthetic pleasure of a disengaged spectator. This report, in fact, may hint toward the existence of an older theory in Sāṃkhya, according to which the interaction between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* was real, whereas upon its cessation, *samyoga* left some traces in the form of *puruṣa*'s reflection in the mind.[23]

The reflection theory of the self in the intellect is usually associated with Vācaspati Miśra (ninth century). In the *Tattvakaumudī*—a commentary on the SK—he describes the relation between pure consciousness and the intellect as follows:

> The intellect (*buddhi*), being material, is unconscious, and therefore, its cognition (of such objects as) a pot is unconscious. Similarly, the different modifications of the intellect (in the form of) pleasure, etc., are unconscious. Consciousness (*puruṣa*), however, is unrelated to pleasure, etc. and is conscious. Reflected in the intellect, along with its cognitions, pleasure etc., it appears as if qualified by these cognitions, pleasure, etc. due to the occurrence of reflection [. . .]. Similarly, due to the occurrence of reflection of consciousness, the unconscious intellect and its cognitive activity appear as if conscious. (my translation)[24]

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[23] Such a theory of a real interaction between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* would provide evidence for Ashton's recent interpretation of the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* mentioned above in n. 6 of the present chapter.

[24] *buddhitattvaṃ hi prākṛtatvād acetanam, iti tadīyo 'dhyavasāyo 'py acetano, ghaṭādivat/ evaṃ buddhitattvasya sukhādayo 'pi pariṇāmabhedā acetanāḥ/ puruṣas tu sukhādyananuṣaṅgī cetanaḥ/ so 'yaṃ buddhitattvavartinā jñānasukhādinā tatpratibimbitas tacchāyāpattyā jñānasukhādimāniva bhavati iti cetano 'nugṛhyate/ citicchāyāpattyā 'cetanā 'pi buddhis tadadhyavasāyo 'py acetanaś cetanavad bhavati iti,* TK on SK 5, 10, 15–20. Vācaspati uses *chāya* (a "shadow") and *pratibimba* ("reflection") interchangeably. He is not the only one. The same does Śaṅkara (see Chapter 3 in this book). Also see Chapter 4, where Metzinger compares Plato's simile of the shadows in the cave with Śaṅkara's use of shadows and reflections. In the BU 2.1.9–12 and KṣU 4.11–12, Bālāki identifies the "person" in the mirror and in the shadow with *brahman*, along with the person in the echo. Norelius mentions an ancient belief that one's reflection in water, mirror, echo, and shadow constitute one's soul (2017:409–410). One can also mention the theme of the double in world literature and mythology traceable both to reflections and shadows. See Rosenfeld: "duality inspires both terror and awe whether that

According to Vācaspati Miśra, the self is reflected in the *buddhi*, the intellect, and thus the unconscious mental complex appears as conscious. At the same time, the self—subjective and immutable—appears as if characterized by mental activity and by objective contents, due to the superimposition of the activities of the intellect and the objects of its cognition upon the reflection of the self in the intellect. Vācaspati's formulation here is close to that of Vindhyavāsin and seems to pursue the same goal—preserving the essential properties of *puruṣa* and the intellect, while accounting for the apparent transference of properties between the two.

Vācaspati appeals to a metaphor of reflection again in his commentary on SK 37, where he explains that the intellect can satisfy the experience of objects for *puruṣa* in the form of pleasure and pain, because as a result of proximity (*sannidhāna*) between the two, *puruṣa*'s reflection or shadow (*chāya*) "falls" on the intellect and assumes its form.[25] It should be noted that Vācaspati uses such terms as *bimba* (reflected image), *pratibimba* (reflection), and *chāya* (reflection or shadow) indiscriminately.[26] Here, a metaphor of reflection illustrates a specific point of how *puruṣa* gets to experience the objects, belonging to an entirely different ontological realm. The experience takes place not in consciousness, but only in the intellect, assuming the form of consciousness.

Vācaspati appeals to his theory of reflection only briefly in his commentary on the SK. In his *Tattvavaiśāradī*—a commentary on the YSBh, however, he discusses it repeatedly in several places for various purposes.[27] The point that Vācaspati repeatedly stresses in this text is that the contact (*saṃyoga*) between consciousness and the intellect does not involve any actual commingling but is rather a mere "proximity" or "copresence" (*sannidhi*). Vācaspati argues that the proximity between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* should not be understood as taking place in time or space, but rather in the sense of "compatibility" (*yogyatā*) between *puruṣa*'s capacity to experience and *prakṛti*'s capacity to be experienced. Due to the complementing, but distinct capacities between

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duality be manifested in a twin birth, or in a man and his shadow, or in one's reflection in water or in a mirror, or in the creation of an artifact resembling the exterior self" (cited in Gyurko 1976:193). For Vācaspati, however, the indiscriminate usage of reflections and shadows points to their similar capacity of reproducing the form of the prototype.

[25] *buddhir hi puruṣasannidhānāt tacchāyāpattyā tadrūpeva sarvaviṣayopabhogaṃ puruṣasya sādhayati/ sukhaduḥkhānubhavo hi bhogaḥ, sa ca buddhau, buddhiśca puruṣarūpaeveti, sā ca puruṣam upabhojayati/* TK 1896:54,13–15.

[26] See Koelman 1970:136.

[27] See TV on YS 1.4; 1.7; 2.17; 2.20; 2.21; 2.23; 3.35; 4.17; 4.19; 4.22; 4.23.

the two, the false impression arises that there is an actual contact. This imaginary contact is caused by the beginningless ignorance (*avidyā*) (TV 19,14–24).[28]

The YSBh-*kāra* compares the contact between the mental faculty and consciousness with a magnet capable of causing a motion of an iron object from a distance, as well as with the relation between the owner and his property (19, 10–12). Vācaspati discusses these examples of non-commingling kinds of contacts as approximating the state of affairs pertaining between consciousness and the mental faculty, but he also attempts to account for the appearance of identity between the two, despite the actual state of affairs. Thus, he explains that the ascription of such affective states of the intellect as "I am confused," "I am suffering," "I am peaceful," to the self, that is, consciousness, is due to the false appearance of identity, caused by the proximity between the two, just like the red color of a rose is falsely perceived in a nearby crystal, or as a dirty mirror superimposes dirt upon the reflection of one's face. In fact, any appearance of experience—cognitive, affective, perceptive, etc.—is a false construct involving the instrument of experience (intellect), its objects (*vṛttis*, mental contents) and a separately existing subject of experience (consciousness), among which there is no "real" interaction (TV 19,14–24). Vācaspati's mirror model of consciousness conveys the *possibility* of experience as a phenomenally constructed synthesis of two ontological differents (consciousness and the material basis of mental functions), and at the same time, the *unreality* of experience, the idea that identity of ontological differents is a false construction.

Vācaspati utilizes a metaphor of reflection to tackle another related problem—the problem of the locus of knowledge. It is generally assumed that the result of some activity is found in the same location in which the activity takes place. Therefore, the intellect, which is the locus of cognitive activity, must also be the locus of the result of this activity—cognition, or knowledge (Rukmani 1988:370). However, according to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the fruit of knowledge is ascribed to the cognizing subject, that is, consciousness. How is it possible that the locus of cognitive activity (the intellect) is different from the locus of knowledge (consciousness)? As Vācaspati eloquently puts it, "there can be no cutting (of branches) with an axe on a Khadira tree that is

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[28] Vācaspati also briefly refers to his theory of *yogyatā* in TK 1896:78,9–12. The YD presents a similar concept of "mutual dependence" (*itaretarāpekṣā*) between *puruṣa*'s power to see and *prakṛti*'s power to be seen (YD 1998:184,28–185, 24; 264,3–17). See also YS 2.23 and 3.35.

then ascribed to a Palāśa tree!" (Larson 2018:143).[29] Vācaspati emphasizes that "the power of knowing has not the *puruṣa* for its substratum, because knowledge does not inhere in it. [. . .] If it did, the *puruṣa* would become changeable" (Prasāda 1978:143, amended).[30] Knowledge appears in consciousness on the account of reflection of consciousness in the mind, upon which objects of cognition are superimposed. Thus, the "sameness" of locus is not violated (TV 29,16–19; 224,12–15).

Although Vācaspati is usually treated as the proponent of a single reflection (of consciousness in the mind), and as such is criticized by Vijñānabhikṣu, in the next section, I will return to Vācaspati to show that in some cases, he actually takes consciousness to reflect the intellect.

In later theories, which will be discussed in detail, the reflection of the pure consciousness in the mental faculty is associated with the emergence of the empirical self or the ego—*ahaṃkāra* (literally—the "I-maker"). We do not find, however, any correlation between the empirical ego and the transcendental self in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and its commentaries, as well as in reports about earlier Sāṃkhya thinkers. *Ahaṃkāra* is described as a mental evolute of the intellect, from which the sense faculties and the organs of action evolve in turn. This faculty is "the cognition 'I,' which arises for the agent with the character of reflection on his own self/nature."[31]

The above definition found in the YD suggests that the idea "I am" arising in the intellect (*pratyaya*) represents the acting and sensing agent (*kartṛ*). Since the sense faculties and organs of action evolve from the ego, the *ahaṃkāra* seems to be the entity to which the sensing and the bodily activities are ascribed by the intellect. While the ego is a real faculty, distinct from the intellect, in the intellect it appears in the form of the sensing and acting subject propositionally related to the objective contents in the form "I see the pot, etc."

On the other hand, it seems that in Sāṃkhya, reflection of consciousness in the intellect does not give rise to a particular idea representing the self. The analogy serves other purposes. Thus, in the YD, the intellect is compared to a crystal reflecting the self, which allows explaining the transference of qualities of consciousness to the unconscious intellect. The reflection is not

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[29] *nanu puruṣavartī bodhaḥ kathaṃ cittagatāyā vṛtteḥ phalam, na hi khadiragocaravyāpareṇa paraśunā palāśe chidā kriyata [. . .],* TV 29,14–16.

[30] *na hi tadādhārā jñānaśaktiḥ tatra jñānasyāsamavāyāt/ anyathā pariṇāmāpattir iti,* TV 224,5–6.

[31] *kartuḥ svātmapratyavamarśātmako yo 'yamahamiti pratyaya utpadyate sa khalv ahaṃkāra,* YD 194,3–4.

real, and thus the appearance of consciousness in the intellect is also not real. The analysis also explains why the contact between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* does not create an appearance of consciousness in other non-conscious objects in *puruṣa*'s proximity, such as a pot. Only the intellect has a reflecting capacity to assume nearby forms, while other non-conscious objects lack this ability (YD 181,13–21).

The notion of the I as representing the ego must be distinguished from the reflection of the self in the intellect. The latter is rather represented in coloring the process of ideation itself as being conscious. While the intellect is intentional, and consciousness essentially has no contents, the reflection of consciousness in the intellect gives rise to a false impression that the intellect is conscious, and consciousness is intentional.

2.3 Reflection in the Self

Qvarnström identifies the earliest theory of reflection of the intellect in the self or consciousness with Vārṣagaṇya (first to second centuries).[32] Earlier I discussed Vindhyavāsin's theory of reflection, according to which consciousness is reflected in the intellect. It must be noted, however, that we do not find any indication that the two theories were rivals. The fact that both of them are mentioned in the *Yuktidīpikā* and the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* (YD 171,12–18, 181,18–21; YSBh 441,19–26; YSBh on YS 444,1–12) might suggest that at least some Sāṃkhya thinkers (perhaps including Vārṣagaṇya and Vindhyavāsin) upheld both theories of reflection.

According to a theory ascribed to Vārṣagaṇya, the intellect (*buddhi*) is reflected in *puruṣa*, the pure self. The self appears as if characterized by mental activity, but, in fact, merely reflects the activity of the intellect. The self remains immutable, and nevertheless appears as if undergoing transformation. The followers of Vārṣagaṇya, as reported in the YD, compared the conscious self to a transparent crystal (*maṇi*) assuming the forms of nearby objects (YD 171,12–18). Bhavya, on the other hand, reports two alternative views held by anonymous Sāṃkhyas. According to the first view, the reflection of the intellect in consciousness is compared to a moon reflected in still water, while neither the water nor consciousness undergo any real change of

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[32] Sometimes this theory of reflection has also been identified with Pañcaśikha (Qvarnström 2012:403).

form. According to the second view, consciousness reflecting the intellect is compared to a mirror reflecting one's face. Here, it is said, consciousness does not undergo change (*vikṛti*), but does experience transformation (*pariṇāma*) (*Tarkajvāla* 6.2, cited in Saito 2011:15).

The second view reported by Bhavya is rather puzzling. On the level of analogy, the difference between reflection in a mirror and reflection in still water is not clear. On the other hand, the difference between change and transformation is not explained. In the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, the word *pariṇāma* is used to describe the process of manifesting the effect potentially contained in its cause as ascribed to *prakṛti*, and not to *puruṣa* (SK 16 and 27). However, if a similar process of transformation is ascribed to *puruṣa*, a contradiction follows, because *puruṣa* is a-causal and unchanging. The claim that *puruṣa* undergoes transformation rather than change may imply an apparent (not real) change in that it reflects the transformations of *prakṛti*. In this sense, *pariṇāma* might have a similar meaning to that of Śaṅkara's *vivarta*—a notion that one unchanging self undergoes an illusory transformation into the forms of the phenomenal world.[33]

The different versions of a theory of reflection in the self are meant to reconcile the doctrine of complete separateness of consciousness from the physical world, as well as its essential a-causality and immutability (SK 17), on the one hand, with the observable fact that the mind or the intellect, in its apprehension of objects, appears to be conscious, on the other. The latter fact, to be sure, is admitted both in the *Sāṃkhyakārikā*[34] and in the *Yogasūtra*.[35] If consciousness is of immaterial and non-mental nature, what makes conscious intentionality possible? In other words, what may explain the phenomenon of being conscious of something, if consciousness is essentially "in itself" and "for itself?"

Another problem concerning the association between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is how any interaction between such distinct entities is possible. The problem is parallel to the problem of mind and matter in Western philosophy. However, while Cartesian dualism gives rise to the metaphysical difficulty of explaining the interaction between mind and matter, Sāṃkhya dualism gives

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[33] Potter 1981:66–67. The view that *puruṣa* undergoes transformation is also the view of *puruṣavāda*, a pre-Śaṅkara Advaita doctrine, discussed in Timalsina 2017.

[34] *tasmāt tat saṃyogāt acetanaṃ cetanāvad iva liṅgam/*
  guṇakartṛtve ca tathā karte 'va bhavaty udāsinaḥ//, SK 20.

[35] *citer apratisaṅkramāyās tadākārāpattau svabuddhisaṃvedanam//*, YS 4.22.

rise to the problem of explaining the interaction between consciousness and mind, since here the mind belongs to the material realm.

The analogy of reflection aims at resolving both metaphysical problems. First, the forms of the intellect and of the objects perceived by the intellect do not affect the immutable nature of the self, just like still water is not actually transformed by the moon's reflection. The activities of the intellect create the illusion that the same activities occur in consciousness, but in reality, consciousness is not affected by these activities. Continuing with this line of thought, it follows that conscious intentionality is a false construct of two unrelated phenomena—intellect's unconscious intentionality (its ability to assume the forms of objects and ideas) and non-intentional consciousness. Consciousness appears to be intentional due to the forms reflected in it, but in fact it remains aloof in its own self-nature. This disassociation between consciousness and intentionality might appear puzzling in the light of contemporary theories of consciousness (Burley 2007:150; Woodhouse 1990:254–255). Nevertheless, for the Sāṃkhyas, consciousness is primarily understood as a seer (*draṣṭṛ*) whose gaze persists even in the absence of an object.

The problem of interaction between immaterial consciousness and material intellect is also addressed by the analogy of reflection. Indeed, no real contact between the two is possible. The contact must be illusory, and the fact that the intellect appears to be conscious, and consciousness appears to be active is a false appearance, like the appearance of forms in a jewel (YD 171,11–172, 31).

More broadly, the theory of reflection in the self explains the process of knowledge in the knower postulated to be separate from the known objects and from the instrument of knowledge (primarily identified with the intellect). From the Sāṃkhya point of view, the unconscious perception of the objects by the intellect is merely a mechanical image-producing process (J.B. Bhattacharya 1965:19). In modern terms, we might compare the ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*) of the objects by the intellect with biochemical brain states, the material aspect of cognition, which does not include any account of consciousness.[36] Consciousness is needed in order to explain the

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[36] Schweizer argues that the unconscious mental activity in Sāṃkhya is comparable with a contemporary computational paradigm accepted in cognitive science and AI (Schweizer 1993:854). See also Perrett's similar position (2001) and Larson's reductive materialist reading of the mind in Sāṃkhya (1983, 2017). Ashton's reservations about these readings can be mentioned (2020). I will discuss Sāṃkhya naturalism about the mind in Chapter 4.

subjective awareness and experience of the images produced by the intellect. Hence, this must admit a difference between the unconscious ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*/ *vyavasāya*) of the objects by the intellect and conscious cognition (*jñāna/caitanya*) taking place in the self (YD 171,10–12.). By maintaining that the intellect with its contents is reflected in the self, the Sāṃkhyas attempt to explain cognitive activity as taking place in the material intellect, while its product—that is, knowledge—appears in the self.[37]

Buddhist opponents criticize the theory of reflection in the self on several grounds. First, they point out to the problem of identity of form (*rūpābheda*). As has been suggested by the anonymous opponent in the YD, if consciousness assumes the form of the intellect with its contents by means of reflection, then any talk of difference between the two becomes absurd. If the form of the intellect is identical with the form of consciousness, it follows that consciousness and intellect are not different and thus postulation of a distinct consciousness is superfluous (YD 171,19–24).

At first glance, the critique seems problematic, because it is easy to think about examples of things having the same form, but being different, such as Devadatta and the sculpture having a shape of Devadatta, or even two horses. It seems, however, that by identity of form the Buddhist opponent means, not the same thing, but the same kind of thing. Thus, if consciousness assumes the form of the intellect, and reflects the forms of external objects, it is of the same kind as the intellect, and there is no reason to postulate another form-assuming entity, when there is already one.

The author of the YD responds that the same accusation can be directed against the Buddhists as they accept that the external object and the idea of this object in the mind (*vijñāna*) have the same form. Does it then imply that external objects and the mind are not different? A possible recourse for the Buddhists would be an appeal to a distinct Buddhist school of the Mind-Only (*vijñānamātra*), according to which, indeed, the object and its cognition are the same thing, and there are no objects external to the mind. This position, however, rests on fundamentally different outlook than that of Sāṃkhya, and if the principle of non-difference of forms is based on the idealist assumptions of mind-only, the Sāṃkhya has the right to reject it (YD 171,25–172, 20).

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[37] Vācaspati maintains that knowledge does not really take place in consciousness, but merely in the reflection of consciousness in the intellect.

The Vijñānamātra Buddhists may still push the point of the redundancy of *puruṣa* on the grounds that presupposing the mind as inherently conscious would be more economical than separating between mind and consciousness. Moreover, "what is the difference between the mind (*citta*), which undergoes change, and the unchanging consciousness?" (my translation).[38] Here, Vācaspati comes to the rescue in his TV and attacks back the Vijñānamātra doctrine, according to which the mind (*citta*) "illuminates" or cognizes its objects and itself at the same time. When the mind cognizes the objects of cognition, it assumes their forms, which allows their conscious experience. What is experienced, however, is the mind's cognitive states representing the objects of cognition, and thus the mind must be regarded as an object of experience. An object of cognition, however, may not serve as a cognizing subject at the same time—hence, the idea that consciousness is an attribute of the mind implies a contradiction in terms. On the other hand, if consciousness is separate from the mind, as in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, there is no contradiction between the mind reflected in consciousness as an object of experience and luminosity of consciousness as the cognizing subject (TV 434,23–31). Interestingly enough, Vācaspati clearly refers here to consciousness as reflecting the mind, and not the other way around.

Kamalaśīla (eighth century) raises a stronger objection regarding the relation between the self and the objects of the intellect reflected in it. He considers two alternatives: the intellect with its contents can be indistinct or distinct from the self. If they are indistinct, then it follows that as a result of the arising and disappearing of the images of external objects, the self would undergo similar modifications, which contradicts its eternal immutable self-nature. If on the other hand, the self is distinct from the reflected images, it does not actually experience them, which contradicts its essential nature as the experiencer (*bhoktṛ*) (*Pañjikā* 114,14–18). In order to experience a particular image or idea, it must affect the experiencer in some way or another. If the reflection affects the reflecting substance, then the self is not essentially different from *prakṛti*, and it changes. If, however, the reflection does not affect the reflecting substance, the substance cannot be said to experience the reflection.

It is possible to reconstruct a response to Kamalaśīla's objection based on two unrelated arguments. The first appears in the YD, in which the author

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[38] *tatkṛtaḥ puruṣasya sadājñātaviṣayatvam? kutastarāṃ vā 'pariṇāmitayā pariṇāminaś cittād bheda iti?*, TV 434,22–23.

points out that consciousness takes the form of the intellect only metaphor-ically (*bhaktito*) (YD 181,26–182, 12). In other words, no contents of the intellect directly appear in the self, and the metaphor of reflection is meant to explain why it only appears that the forms of the objects belong to con-sciousness. The second argument has been already presented in a previous section. As we have seen, Vācaspati in TV on YS 1.4 argued that no actual contact takes place; there is merely a proximity between the mind and the self. This proximity is neither closeness in space, nor in time; it is the "fit-ness" (*yogyatā*) between the power of consciousness to experience and the power of the mind to be experienced. Due to the complementing, but dis-tinct capacities between the two, the false impression arises that there is an actual contact (TV 19,14–24).

The author of the YD and Vācaspati deconstruct conscious intentional experience into two completely separate components (the experiencer and the experienced) among which there is no real interaction. Our phenomenal sense of unified experience is essentially mistaken. Thus, the Sāṃkhya may respond to Kamalaśīla that the property of experience (*bhoktṛtā*) of con-sciousness should not involve any internalization of external form, but rather the ability to observe these forms in another entity. There is no contradiction in the statement that the reflections in the self are distinct from the self and nevertheless, that the self-experiences these reflections.

Another objection to a theory of reflection in the self comes from Bhavya. If the intellect with its contents is reflected in the self, the self must be seen as the assisting cause (*upakārihetu*) responsible for the arising of the reflection, just like the water is the assisting cause for the appearance of the reflection of the face. However, the self is said to be a-causal (*anupakārin*) (SK 60); hence a contradiction (TJ on MMK 23, in Saito 2011:16). If the self can produce a reflection, it must be causally efficacious, and thus is not really different from *prakṛti*.

The cause of reflection is often revoked in later discussions on *pratibimba* in Advaita Vedānta. Does a reflection of one's face arise due to the face, the mirror, or due to the contact between the two? In fact, the author of the *Yuktidīpikā* has already responded to this question in his argument against a Buddhist advocate of momentariness on the relation between the intellect and its objects. The intellect cannot be the cause of the reflected image of an object just like the water cannot be the cause of the reflected image of the face, because once the face is removed, the image disappears. The same analogy can be applied to the reflection of the intellect in the self. While

Bhavya argues that the self is only an assisting cause, while the efficient cause is the face, the author of the *Yuktidīpikā* holds that the face cannot be seen as the main cause of reflection due to its remoteness from water (YD 190,10–15). Reflection has no efficient cause, and thus any talk of an assisting cause is meaningless.

However, since the arising of reflection in the mirror is an analogy for the arising of an illusory appearance, the question more broadly refers to illusory causation. If the causes of an illusory phenomenon are real, while their effect is unreal, which factors are responsible for the transformation of a real cause into an illusory effect?

Bhavya suggests that without the presence of *puruṣa*, no reflections of the intellect with its states and contents would be possible; hence it follows that *puruṣa* is causally responsible for the arising of reflection, just like the soil is the assisting cause to the growth of a plant directly brought about by human agency. The Sāṃkhya, however, may respond that the reflection is not real, and thus in reality *puruṣa* does not give rise to anything. It seems that Śaṅkara has had a similar explanation in view, when he argued that nobody is being reborn, because the entity undergoing transmigration in *saṃsāra* is merely an illusory reflection of the self (Upad. 1.18.37–46).

In Yoga, the cause of illusion is ignorance (*avidyā*), which is taken to be a distinct cognitive state, and which has no beginning (TV 19,27–29; YSBh 147,18–23). Ignorance, or taking something for something it is not (e.g., the self for what is not the self) (YS 2.5)[39] belongs to the mind, and *puruṣa* has nothing to do with it. In Sāṃkhya, however, ignorance is merely an absence of knowledge, and its existence is explained in metaphysical rather than epistemic terms. The author of the *Yuktidīpikā* explains that in non-liberated beings, the current of knowledge is obstructed due to the predominance of the *guṇas* of tamas and rajas in the mental configuration of these beings (YD 232,23–233, 1; YD 252,28–253, 13).

If the cause of the illusory transference of the intellect's properties onto the self in Sāṃkhya is to be accounted for, we must look for the proclaimed relation between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. In SK 60, it has been said that *prakṛti* acts for the sake of *puruṣa*. *Prakṛti* is called *upakāriṇī* (a servant), while *puruṣa* is named *anupakārin* (non-servant). Although the meaning of *upakāriṇī* is different here from *upakārihetu*, it is clear that the only causally active entity

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[39] See a detailed discussion on *anyathākhyāti*, or ignorance as mistaking something for something else, in Dasgupta 1974:274–276.

is *prakṛti*, while *puruṣa* must be seen as the final cause (*artha*), a kind of an unmoved mover. From this perspective, Bhavya's accusation must be seen as an equivocation on the meaning of *upakārin*. As the final cause, the subject of experience, the self, is responsible for the arising of reflection in it by adding the element of "appearance" (*vyaktatā*) to blind material processes, but reflection is not brought about *by* him. Causal activity takes place in *prakṛti* but is *meant* to be consciously experienced.

2.4 Vijñānabhikṣu's Double-Reflection Theory

Vijñānabhikṣu (sixteenth century) is one of the most original commentators on Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*. Vijñānabhikṣu is particularly notorious for his attempts to synthesize and harmonize what has been considered as distinct philosophical schools of Vedānta (particularly Bhedābheda Vedānta), Sāṃkhya, and Yoga. This fact has a little bearing on this chapter, as his theory of reflection is developed within the limits of the metaphysical framework of the Yoga school.

The main text in which Vijñānabhikṣu develops his double-reflection theory (*anyonyapratibimba*) is the *Yogavārttika*—a commentary on Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* and the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*. Vijñānabhiku, however, discusses his double-reflection theory also in his *Sāṃkhyapravacanabhāṣya*, a commentary on one of the relatively late texts of the Sāṃkhya, and in his two compendiums on Yoga and Sāṃkhya, the *Yogasārasaṃgraha* and the *Sāṃkhyasāra*.

Vijñānabhikṣu criticizes Vācaspati's theory of reflection of the self in the intellect, as laid out in TV 29,14–20, where the latter attempted to prove that the act of cognition has the same locus as its result, by ascribing the produced knowledge to *puruṣa*'s reflection in the intellect. Vijñānabhikṣu puts forward the following objections. We know from the YSBh that cognition is the result of the intellect's cognitive activity that "belongs" to *puruṣa*. In Vācaspati's theory, however, cognition is ascribed to the reflection of the self located in the intellect, and not to the real self. Second, reflection is not real, and therefore, the arising of knowledge in it does not make sense. Third, Vācaspati's theory contradicts the scriptures, according to which the self is the knower. Moreover, both reflections are necessary in order to avoid a contradiction of the subject being an object. If there is no self-reflection in the intellect by means of which the self becomes aware of itself, it follows that the self knows

itself directly. This means that the self is both the subject and the object of knowledge, which would be a contradiction (YV 33,6–22; YV 445,2127). If, on the other hand, the intellect is not reflected in the self, it follows that the intellect is both the subject and the object of its cognitive activity (YV 21,23–22, 14). Finally, the phenomenon of bondage and liberation becomes redundant and meaningless because both seem to be attributed to the reflection of the self and not to the real self (Ram 1988:81–87).

Instead, Vijñānabhikṣu postulates his double-reflection theory, a synthesis of the two theories of single reflection. The self is reflected in the intellect along with other mental representations, and these are reflected back into the self. Thus, *puruṣa* becomes the locus of knowledge, reflecting the apprehended content of the intellect, without undergoing change. It also becomes the agent of experience, bondage, liberation, etc., without changing. The distinction between subject and object holds, because the real *puruṣa* remains the subject, while the intellect together with all its contents, including the reflection of *puruṣa*, is reflected in it as an object (YV 21,23–22, 14).

It is true that Vācaspati attempts to avoid the disruption between the locus of action and the substratum of the effect by ascribing cognitive experience to a consciousness-reflected image. Yet it must be clear that he is not a staunch advocate of a single reflection in the mind, as has been suggested by Rukmani (1988:370) and Ram (1988:77–78). I have already shown in the previous section that in TV 434,23–31, Vācaspati positively appeals to reflection of the mind in consciousness. He also appeals to reflection in consciousness in TV 213,18–19, and in some cases, it is not clear whether reflection is in consciousness or in the mind (TV 218,13). Thus, just like in the YD, where both theories are presented without any indication of mutual rivalry, it would be probably wrong framing the disagreement between Vijñānabhikṣu and Vācaspati in terms of double-reflection–single reflection controversy. What is important to notice is that while Vācaspati does not make any connection between two reflections and uses each according to his needs, Vijñānabhikṣu emphasizes their mutuality (*anyonyatva*). I will return to his theory of mutual reflection in the following section to relate it to the concept of *asmitā*.

2.5 Mental Representation of the Self in Yoga (Asmitā)

Another issue to be considered here is the concept of *asmitā* in Yoga, which, as I would like to argue, is helpful in understanding the "I" notion in relation

to a reflection of the self. The term *ahaṃkāra* familiar from the Sāṃkhya metaphysics is not mentioned in the YS. However, a new term *asmitā* is introduced, which has not been used in Sāṃkhya. The author of the YSBh identifies the ego ("I-am-ness," *asmitā*) in Yoga with the faculty of the "I-maker" (*ahaṃkāra*) in Sāṃkhya, which indicates a particular function of the mind (*citta*) responsible for associating the self with the intellect, the physical body, and with external objects falling under the scope of the "mine" (*mama*) (YSBh 374,7–16).

The precise definition of *asmitā* in the *Yogasūtra* is "the identity between the power of seeing and the power by which one sees."[40] This definition of the ego describes not a particular objectively existing entity (as in Sāṃkhya), but a mistaken identity between the subject and the object of experience, namely between the self and the mind. *Asmitā* is explicitly understood to be a manifestation of ignorance (*avidyā*) regarding the difference of natures of *prakṛti* and the self (YS 2.5). It should be mentioned that ignorance in Yoga is not an absence of knowledge, but a real cognitive state said to be a "different kind of knowledge" (*jñānāntaram*) opposite in its qualities to true knowledge (YSBh 147,22–23).

What is the relation between ignorance and *asmitā*? Vijñānabhikṣu identifies ignorance with the general idea of the I (*sāmānyato 'haṃbuddhiḥ*) appearing in the intellect and defines *asmitā* as complete identity of the self with the qualities of the intellect superimposed on the self. Ignorance prepares the grounds for the arising of a mental representation of the self as possessing the properties of the intellect. Vijñānabhikṣu characterizes the stage of ignorance prior to the arising of *asmitā* as that of "difference and non-difference" (*bhedābheda*),[41] in which complete identity is not apprehended (*atyantābhedāgrahaṇāt*), but which already includes the objective and subjective components to be confused in the next stage. The arising of *asmitā* brings about the complete identity of a mental representation of the self with mental properties, functions, and states of the intellect in the form "I am Īśvara," "I am the experiencer," etc.[42]

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[40] *dṛgdarśanaśaktayor ekātmatevāsmitā*, YS 2.6.

[41] I am following this translation of *bhedābheda* as suggested by Nicholson (2010:39).

[42] The choice of these examples is rather puzzling, as Īśvara is a unique sort of *puruṣa*, and the ability to experience (*bhoktṛtva*) is a property of consciousness. Thus, the above-mentioned propositions ascribing these predicates to the "I" do not illustrate the imposition of the intellect's properties on consciousness. In his further discussion of the same *sutra*, Vijñānabhikṣu illustrates the superimposition of the intellect's properties upon the self by more straightforward examples of such propositions as "I am suffering," "I am peaceful," "I am awake," etc.

Vijñānabhikṣu introduces several analogies, including that of reflection, in order to illustrate the difference between *avidyā* and *asmitā*. *Avidyā* is compared to two distant trees, *asmitā* to seeing them as one tree. *Avidyā* is compared to a person identifying himself with his wife and children; *asmitā* to this person's experience of his dependents' joy and sorrow as his own. Finally, *avidyā* is compared to the reflection of the moon in the water; *asmitā* is seen as ascribing the movement of the water, the dirt in it, etc. to the moon reflected in it (YV 152,16–29).

The noun *asmitā* comes from first-person conjugation of the verb "to be" (√*as* + *mi)* followed by the abstract noun ending *tā* (Jakubzcak 2011:45). In my opinion, the common translation "I-am-ness," which I have used earlier, is not entirely satisfying. Strictly speaking, the word "I" (*aham*), found in the compound *ahaṃkāra* (the I-maker), is absent from the abstract noun *asmitā*. The most precise translation of *asmitā* must be "am-ness"—that which connects the I and a particular object identified with the I.

When the self is reflected in the mind, it appears as an identity "I am I," the first I being the subject of the equation, the self; the second I—its object, its reflection in the mind. The "am" is the identifying mediator between the two. *Asmitā* is this "am"—not a distinct entity, but something like a sign of equation ("=") or a transparent surface of the mirror of the mind.

The idea that the mind (*citta*), which in Yoga includes the intellect (*buddhi*) as one of its functions, reflects the self and the objects, has been adopted by the author of the YSBh in his commentary on the YS IV.23. The author of the YSBh compares the mind to a crystal in that it also reflects all objects. "The mind is colored by both subjectivity and objectivity, the knower and the knowable; it assumes the nature of both the conscious and unconscious" (Prasāda 1978:300–301).[43] The commentator suggests that the way the intellect reflects external objects is identical to the way it reflects the self, although the former reflection is the object of experience, and the latter is its subject. Unlike in Sāṃkhya, here the idea of the I is not caused by the representation of *ahaṃkāra*, but by the reflection of the transcendent self in the intellect. Thus, the idea of the I, according to Yoga, represents pure consciousness.

Vācaspati, in his commentary on the same verse from the YS, admits even more explicitly that the reflection of the self in the intellect gives rise to its mental representation:

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[43] *tadetac cittam eva draṣṭṛ dṛśyoparaktaṃ viṣayaviṣayinirbhāsaṃ cetanācetanasvarūpāpannam,* YSBh 444,2–3.

As the mind, coloured by blue and other objects, establishes their existence by perception itself, so also due to assuming the reflection of the knower, the mind, coloured by that, establishes the knower, too, by means of perception itself. For there is a cognition with two aspects [namely, the object and the subject]: "I know the blue object." Therefore, like the object, the knower of that [object], although established by perception, is not shown thereby as existing separately [from the mind], like the reflection of the moon in water. However, to this extent it does not mean that (the perception of the self) is not valid means of knowledge. And from the fact that the moon in the water is a false cognition, it does not follow that the form of the moon is falsely cognized. Therefore, due to the reflection of [the self] in the mind, the activity of the mind has consciousness, too, as its object; it is not the case that it does not have consciousness as its object. (Prasāda 1978:301, amended)[44]

Vācaspati makes it clear that consciousness is the object of perception just like any other object. It is not a direct cognition of the self in its externality, but a cognition of the self's reflection, its mental representation as a subject of experience such as "I cognize a blue object." The context is again a confrontation with Vijñānavādins, for whom the occurrence of consciousness, as well as of the objects of perception, is inseparable from the mind, and does not require postulating external prototypes. This discussion highlights the Sāṃkhya-Yoga representationalist model of consciousness, in which consciousness in itself is distinguished from its experience in the mind, but at the same time is faithfully represented in the act of perception. Elsewhere, Vācaspati stresses *puruṣa*'s ability to be reflected in the intellect as the sole reason for its being an object of cognition. He denies that consciousness can know itself, in order to avoid infinite regress of consciousness knowing itself as an object, which in turn knows itself as an object, ad infinitum. Therefore, he postulates that the object of knowledge is the reflected image of consciousness in the intellect, and never the original consciousness (TV 350,20–351, 5).

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[44] *yathā hi nīlādyanuraktaṃ cittaṃ nīlādyarthaṃ pratyakṣeṇaivāvasthāpayaty evaṃ draṣṭṛcchāyāpattyā tad- anuraktaṃ cittaṃ draṣṭāram api pratyakṣeṇāvathāpayati/ asti hi dvyākāraṃ jñānaṃ nīlam ahaṃ saṃvedamīti/ tasmāj jñeyavat taj jñātāpi pratyakṣasiddho pi na vivicyāvasthāpito yathā jale candramaso bimbam/ na tv etāvatā tad aprayyakṣam/ na cāsya jalagatatve tad apramāṇam iti candrarūpe'pyapramāṇaṃ bhavitum arhati/ tasmāc cittapratibimbatayā caitanyagocarāpi cittavṛttir na caitanyagocareti/*, TV 444,16–22.

2.6 K.C. Bhattacharyya's Interpretation of Mutual Reflection Theory

In his posthumously published *Studies in Sāṃkhya Philosophy* and *Studies in Yoga Philosophy*, K.C. Bhattacharyya explores which function of the *buddhi* may be responsible for receiving the reflection of consciousness. He points out that according to Vijñānabhikṣu's mutual reflection theory, the reflection of consciousness, or the self, in the *buddhi* means that the *vṛtti* for self-knowledge takes the form of the self, in exactly the same way as the *vṛtti* for object-knowledge takes the form of the object. The self, as a subjective "I" thus appears as an objective "me." This *vṛtti* is again reflected in the self, so that the self could be known, just like any object is reflected in the self as known. However, as Bhattacharyya points out, in this case, there will be no knowledge of consciousness as the subjective "I" but only as an objective "me." In other words, self-knowledge can extend only so far as grasping the improperly objectified self, appropriated by the mind, the mentalized and embodied self, the self in the form of the mind (Bhattacharyya 1983a:190–191). Bhattacharyya stresses that "the reflection of the self in *vṛtti*—which is the so-called objectified self—is not self at all, while the reflection of the felt object in *vṛtti* is not other than the object, the presentation of the object being the object though the object is distinct from the presentation" (1983b:229).

Instead, Bhattacharyya puts forward his own mutual reflection theory, where he ascribes reflection to two different functions of the *buddhi*: *vṛtti* and *bhāva*. In SK 40–52, the *bhāva*s are described as certain dispositions or modes, accompanying, and conditioning the continuous existence of the mental faculty, along with the senses and the capacity for experiencing qualia (*tanmātras*). The *bhāva*s are eight in number and include virtue (*dharma*), knowledge (*jñāna*), non-attachment (*vairāgya*), power (*aiśvarya*), and their opposites—*adharma*, *ajñāna*, *raga,* and *anaiśvarya*. The first four *bhāva*s are positive factors, responsible for happy experiences in this life and in the next, and in some cases are conducive to liberation. The latter four are unhappy and bounding factors.

While the *vṛtti*s are intuitions of external objects given to the *buddhi* through the senses, Bhattacharyya interprets the *bhāva*s to be the projective functions of the mind, responsible for "making a phenomenal object out of the given" (1983a:190). Bhattacharyya's Kantian reading of Sāṃkhya theory of reflection presupposes the necessity of both the construction and the apprehension in every experience of an object. The concept of reflection, thus,

must have two different meanings: "the idea is constitutive of the object and the idea is like the object" (190). What is common to these two meanings, apparently, is that reflection is contrasted with becoming—the reflecting substance appears like the reflected object, without actually becoming one, as well as phenomenally manifesting an object, without actually causing any real transformation in the object.[45] Thereby Bhattacharyya introduces a new theory of reflection of the intellect in the external object, understood as the projection of the *bhāva*s into the object apprehended in *vṛtti*.[46]

To return to consciousness reflected in the intellect—while Bhattacharyya admits that it can be reflected in *vṛtti*, such a reflection cannot be considered as representing the subjective I, but only the objectified "me." There is an important difference, however, between the object reflected in *vṛtti* and the self represented by *vṛtti*. Bhattacharyya argues that

> the object is *given* to the *vṛtti* wearing its form while the self is not given to the corresponding *vṛtti*. The form of *vṛtti* is an anticipatory construction of *buddhi* in either case, but while the form of the experienced object is as much given as constructed, the form of the self is only constructed and is a mere *vikalpa* [imagination—D.S.], the self being no object of experience. (1983b:229)

Yet consciousness is represented as the I while reflected in a *bhava* as a projecting subject, as in a certitude "I know *x*" (190). Ascribing the knowledge of the object to the I constitutes an intellect's reflection back into the self: "the self appears to take the reflection (*pratibimba*) of *buddhi-vṛtti* which reflects the object and to be itself reflected in *buddhi-bhāva* which projects the object" (190).

Liberating knowledge (*viveka*) appears in the form of identity "I am I," which is a particular *vṛtti* called *vyaktatā-mātra* ("manifest-ness only"), or the intellect in the "bare form of self-identity." This self-identity points to the purely subjective nature of self, the self as distinct from the mind. "The primal certitude 'I am I' is thus equivalent to 'mind (*buddhi*) is not I'" (184).

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[45] E.g., see Bhattacharyya 1983a:181: "The affective differentiations—pleasurable, painful, etc.—are manifested only in the tattvas that do not become but are immediately reflected in the *bhogya* world that is distinct *from* them and not distinct in them."

[46] In fact, Bhattacharyya may be said to develop a theory of multiple reflections. Thus, he speaks about the unity of the body as reflecting the unity of the self (1983a:193; 1983b:240) and about consecutive reflections of the object "in a *vṛtti* of external organ, that again in a *vṛtti* of *manas* and so on; *buddhi- vṛtti* further is said to be reflected in the self . . ." (1983a:189).

Although the mind is itself a kind of object, it is a sole source of knowledge about the self as a subject. "The self is never known by itself: there is properly no intuition of the self" (191).

The proposition "I am I" is an identity insofar as the I is identified with itself. K.C. Bhattacharyya refers to it as an "analytic judgment" or "self-identity" (183). At the same time, this identity appearing in a form of a judgment paradoxically means that the self is not really the content of judgment: "the content of judgement is objective, and the analytic identity is but the objective representation or symbolism for the self from which it is distinct" (184). I would like to point out that this identity also misrepresents the self, in a sense that the subject of the proposition "I am I" (the first I) is identified with its predicate (the second I). The mistaken identification of the subject (the real I reflected in the *buddhi-bhāva*) with an object (the I's reflection or mental representation in *vṛtti*) prepares the ground for the identity of the subjective I with objects or objective states and actions other than the I appearing in statements "I am this body," "I am happy," "I am thinking." Bhattacharyya renders the identity in the form of "I am that" as a "synthetic judgment" or "identity of differents" (1983a:183).

Bhattacharyya argues that in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the self-identity "I am I" (or in an even more objectified version "I am me") is mediated by *asmitā* (1983b:222). *Asmitā* is responsible for the illusion that pure selfhood, an entity not open to any sort of relations, is related to objective phenomena through the identity between the reflection of the self in a *bhāva* as a subject and its reflection in a *vṛtti*, as well as the *vṛtti*s of external objects. Or, if we take the theory of self-representation accepted by the YSBh-*kāra*, Vācaspati and Vijñānabhikṣu, *asmitā* is responsible for the self's identification with its own reflection in the form of a mental representation and with other objects of the mind.

The practice of Yoga constitutes an active disassociation of the self from its illusory reflections. First, the continuous fixation of the intellect on a single object makes the stream of images reflected in the intellect stop, thus interrupting the process of self's entanglement in its identity with differents (YS 1.13). A practitioner withdraws his mind from sense objects (*pratyāhāra*), thereby stopping the identity of differents. The intellect frees itself from the intrusion of its mental images (remembered or perceived). In other words, the practitioner aims at arresting the entire "thinking" activity. At some point, only *asmitā* and the self's reflection remain present in the intellect. Vijñānabhikṣu explains that at this stage, the direct perception of the

self alone appears in the mind in the form "I am" (*asmi*) (YV 56,33–57, 8).[47] In other words, the yogi returns to self-identity in the form "I am I," which is still a form of ignorance, as the identificatory function of *asmitā* has not been eliminated yet. The final liberation of the self from the intellect consists in complete cessation of all identity between the two. The intellect's mental activity ceases; the intellect does not reflect the self any longer, and thus, *asmitā* stops functioning. At this point, the self withdraws into itself (YS 4.34).

I would like to suggest that the second reflection of the intellect in the self is required in order to create a repetition of the process of identification of the self with a non-self over and over again. The intellect and the self produce, by reflecting each other, an infinite series of "I am I am I am I . . . " like an infinite hall created by two mirrors held in front of each other. In a single reflection of the self in the intellect in the form, "I am I" there is a mistaken identity between the subject and the object. This mistake, however, cannot imply ignorance (*avidyā*), since the distinction between the subject and the object is also present in this analytic judgment. In fact, Abhinavagupta, a Kashmiri Śaiva from the tenth to eleventh centuries has pointed out that the mere fact of appearance of the mountain's reflection in a mirror does not make one believe that the mountain has actually entered the mirror (Ratié 2017:212–213).[48] Vijñānabhikṣu may have well been aware of this point and postulated two reflections in order to account not only for the appearance of consciousness in the mind, or vice versa, but also for mistaking consciousness for the mind.[49] Between two reflecting and reflected substances, the infinite hall of self-reflections does not allow one to establish which I is the original subject and which is its reflection as an object. It is precisely this infinity of reflected self-images that creates the fundamental ignorance regarding the real reference of the self.

As far as I can tell, the connection between the theory of reflection and the idea of *asmitā* in Yoga has never been explicitly acknowledged by traditional

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[47] I believe there is no reason to assume that *asmitā* as one of the five impurities (*kleśas*) in the YS 2.6 is different from *asmitā* as a residue of ignorance experienced during *saṃprajñāta samādhi* in the YS 1.17.

[48] In the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*—a late Mahāyāṇa text, perhaps, composed in China—the Buddha narrates a curious Narcissus-like case of madness involving a mistake of confusing the reflection of one's own face with the real one. "Have you not heard of Yajnadatta in Shravasti who on impulse one morning held a mirror to his face and fell in love with the head in the mirror? He gazed at the eyes and eyebrows but got angry because he could not see his own face. He decided he must be a li mei ghost. Having lost all his bearings, he ran madly out. What do you think? Why did this person set out on a mad chase for no reason?" Purna said, "That person was insane. There's no other reason" (Hsuan 2002:102). I would like to thank Albert Lu for referring me to this interesting source.

[49] I must admit, however, that Vijñānabhikṣu never brings up this issue explicitly.

or contemporary scholars, except for K.C. Bhattacharyya. Traditional interpretations, however, imply that *asmitā*, the mediating relation between a subject and an object, must refer to the reflective surface of the mind responsible for the illusory (mis)identification between the self and the mind in the form "I am I." Alternately, Bhattacharyya's interpretation suggests that *asmitā* equates the reflection of the self in a *bhāva* as a subject with the self's reflection in a *vṛtti* as an object. Since the mind reflects not only the self, but also the objects, *asmitā* is also responsible for the self's identification with what is not the self in the form "I am that."[50]

2.7   Summary

Both Sāṃkhya and Yoga propose representationalist theories of perception. The metaphor of reflection is utilized in both systems not only to account for the process by which the external objects leave imprints in the mental faculty; they also explain the idea of the "I" as a mental representation of an external subject. In Sāṃkhya, the "I" is the representation of the ego (*ahaṃkāra*) as a distinct mental faculty. In Yoga, it is the representation of the transcendent self, superimposed on the representations of objects in the form of *asmitā*.

Sāṃkhya and Yoga develop and effectively apply mirror models in response to Buddhist attacks on various aspects of metaphysical dualism and representational realism. The earliest theory of reflection has been put forward to account for the mental faculty's ability to assume the forms of the external objects. Then, the need to reconcile the immutability and separateness of consciousness with its ability to cognize and experience physical reality has led to the growing popularity of the mirror reflection as the standard metaphor for the illusory interaction between consciousness and the mind. In the tenth century, Vācaspati Miśra appeals to reflection, not only to account for the unreality of the contact between consciousness and the mind, but also regards it as an example of a possibility of the phenomenal experience, in the presence of separately existing entities. He also appeals to reflection of consciousness in the mind, to fulfill the metaphysical requirement that the locus of cognitive action must be the same as the locus of knowledge

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[50] Curiously enough, Bhattacharyya's formulation of a mistaken identity between a subject and an object "I am that" seems to imply that the *Upaniṣadic* statement "Thou art that" entails a similar mistake. As I will show further, Śaṅkara and Padmapāda were aware of the problem and made efforts to explain what exactly makes the identity between "thou" and "that" real.

produced by that action. Finally, Vācaspati exploits the metaphor, in order to avoid "self-illumination"—whether of consciousness or of the mind—which he considers as a contradiction in terms, as well as to avoid infinite regress of consciousness knowing the knowing consciousness. K.C. Bhattacharyya, a modern interpreter of Sāṃkhya and Yoga, ascribes reflection to both the apprehending function of the intellect and its projecting, or constructing, function in the experience of the object. Consciousness, reflected in the apprehending function of the intellect, is misrepresented as an objective "me." At the same time, consciousness is more properly represented as a subject, while being reflected in the projecting function of the intellect.

I have also argued that the second reflection of the mental faculty with its contents in consciousness, defended by Vārṣagaṇya and Vijñānabhikṣu, is meant to reconcile our phenomenal experience of conscious intentionality with the doctrine of pure consciousness. I have further suggested that taken together, the reflection in the intellect and the reflection in the self may account for the deep entanglement of the pure subject with objective reality, leading to the mistaken identification of the subject with mental and material components of *prakṛti*. In the next chapter I am turning to the system of Advaita Vedānta, which appropriates the dualist model of mirror reflection for defending its metaphysical non-dualism.

3

One Consciousness, Many Mirrors

Mirror Models in Advaita Vedānta

Almost all philosophers of Advaita utilized mirror-models of consciousness—these models even received recognition as the school's trademark.[1] Three philosophers—Śaṅkara (seventh to eighth centuries CE), Padmapāda (820 CE), and Prakāśātman (1000 or 110 CE)—contributed more than anybody else to the systematic development of non-dualist theories of the mirror reflection of consciousness and prepared the ground for later advancements in what came to be regarded as the "school of reflection" (*pratibimbavāda*).

Starting with Śaṅkara, the Advaitins adopt many elements of Sāṃkhya and Yoga metaphysics, including their mirror models of consciousness. In general, the Advaitins accept the ontological distinction between pure consciousness, or the self, and the rest of objective reality, as well as the psychological terminology of *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and *manas*, although—as I will show—they gradually come to contest the meaning and the reference of these terms. Two important differences introduced by Advaita concern the nature of objective reality and the number of selves. The objective world, which includes physical objects, our bodies, sense organs, and the mental faculty, is essentially not real, contrary to how it is perceived in Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The phenomenally experienced world of creation and multiplicity is not a transformation of a material substance, but rather the product of primordial illusion, wrongly superimposed on the sole reality of consciousness. Consciousness is understood as unity of being, or *brahman*, eternally absorbed in the bliss of its self-nature. Consciousness is only one, as opposed to plurality of conscious selves in Sāṃkhya and Yoga.

Mirror-models of consciousness take new directions in Advaita Vedānta. The new factor incorporated into the Advaita account of reflection of the

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[1] Among the Advaitins or Advaita interpreters, who have used the imagery of mirror reflection to describe consciousness, one can mention Maṇḍana Miśra, Vācaspati Miśra, Sarvajñātman, and Vidyāraṇya (Timalsina 2009:377).

self in the inner organ is the non-dualist orientation of the system. While to Sāṃkhya and Yoga, reflection is primarily a solution to the problem of interaction between consciousness and the intellect, the Advaitins utilize the reflection analogy to explain the apparent multiplicity of individual selves contradicted by the proclaimed reality of one self. Similarly, the question of identity between the transcendental self and its reflections comes to the fore in the discussion of the liberating scriptural formula "thou art that" (*tat-tvam-asi*).

Along with dualist mirror models of consciousness adapted from Sāṃkhya and Yoga, another source of inspiration for Advaita models is the grammarian Bhartṛhari's (fifth century CE) non-dualist model of apparent multiplicity arising from the unity of *brahman*, which he compares to an illusory duplication of a face in a mirror. I will discuss Śaṅkara's adoption of Bhartṛhari's model in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* and his commentaries on various Upaniṣadic texts, as well as his adoptions of Sāṃkhya-Yoga models in the *Upadeśasāhasrī*. I will further proceed to Śaṅkara's student Padmapāda, who developed a theory of *ahaṃkāra* as an entity supervening upon the illusory superimposition of objective properties upon purely subjective consciousness, which he compares to the illusory appearance of a face in a mirror. I will also examine Prakāśātman's arguments for a metaphor of reflection as a preferable way of describing consciousness, as well as its relation to other metaphors, such as a rope mistaken for a snake, or a single space divided by empty pots. In the last section of this chapter, I will discuss the later developments in post-Prakāśātman's Pratibimbavāda, where god (*īśvara*) takes *brahman*'s place in its role of the reflection prototype.

The major criticism that was raised against Advaitin theories of reflection was the appropriateness of a dualist imagery of one entity reflected in another to describe the reality of only one substance. Moreover, it is unclear what it means for a formless unity to be reflected, whereas the known cases of mirror reflection involve reproduction of forms. Advaitins tackled these problems in different ways, and I will try to assess their solutions.

3.1 Non-dualist Theories of Reflection before Śaṅkara

Perhaps the first non-dualist version of theory of reflection is found in the writings of the grammarian Bhartṛhari (fifth century CE). In his *Vākyapadīya*, Bhartṛhari depicts the manifoldness observable in our world as apparent

distinctions in the cognition of a single entity. The perceived plurality in the real unity of being (*brahman*) parallels the unity of the "word principle" (*śabda-brahman*) appearing as the plurality of sounds and words. The false appearance of plurality is compared to a mirror in which entities are perceived without actually being there (VPVr I.152,6–153, 1; Timalsina 2009:373). The transformation of the one into many in the empirical world and in language must be understood as no more real than the illusory duplication of the same face reflected in a mirror. Timalsina points out that Bhartṛhari invokes the concept of reflection in order to demonstrate that *śabda-brahman* may seem to undergo change (*vivarta*), while in reality it remains eternal and immutable (VP I.49; VPVr I.134,1–2; Timalsina 2009:377–378). Bhartṛhari alters the original Sāṃkhya model of the real transformation of *prakṛti* to fit his non-dualist model of only apparent change in *śabda-brahman*.

Elsewhere, Bhartṛhari explains the appearance of consciousness imposed on unconscious entities as *pratibimba* (VP III.14.326; Timalsina 2009:378). In this case, Bhartṛhari's application of the reflection model does not necessarily imply non-dualism and is not essentially different from theories of *puruṣa*'s reflection in the intellect in Sāṃkhya-Yoga. If Qvarnström is right in attributing the earliest reflection theory in Sāṃkhya to Vindhyavāsin from the fifth century CE, then it is possible that Bhartṛhari has adopted it from Sāṃkhya without significant changes, although it could be the other way around.

Taken together, Bhartṛhari's various applications of *pratibimba* prepare the ground for the non-dualist theories of reflection in Advaita Vedānta. On the one hand, Bhartṛhari compares the process of the illusory multiplication of one unified substance to the illusory duplication of a person, or a thing, in a mirror. On the other hand, he shares with Sāṃkhya-Yoga the assumption that the "animation" of unconscious entities by consciousness can be explained by the reflection of the latter in the former. I will show further how the combination of these two explanations of reflection will set the stage for the unique Advaita model of one self reflected as plurality of individual selves (*jīvas*).

Timalsina discusses at length Bhartṛhari's impact on Maṇḍana Miśra, an influential Advaita-Vedānta philosopher from the seventh to eighth centuries. Maṇḍana repeatedly applies the metaphor of reflection in order to explain the distinction of *jīva*, or individual self, from *brahman*. *Brahman* is taken as a prototype (*bimba*), and the *jīva* as its reflection (*pratibimba*).[2] I will

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[2] See BS 7,9–10; 12,10–11, 21–22; 11,11–12; 72,5; 15,26–16, 3; Timalsina 2009:380.

demonstrate that there are similarities between Bhartṛhari's mirror-model and that of Śaṅkara as well.

3.2 Śaṅkara's Theories of Reflection

3.2.1 Śaṅkara's Theory of Brahman's Reflection in Jīva

Śaṅkara mentions the concept of reflection (*pratibimba, ābhāsa,*[3] *praticchāyā,* or *chāyā*) repeatedly in almost all of his writings.[4] He is probably the first Advaitin to explicitly utilize the model of reflection in order to explain the multiplicity of selves as a misperception of a single unitary self:

> And that individual soul is to be considered a mere appearance of the highest Self, like the reflection of the sun in the water; it is neither directly that (i.e. the highest Self), nor a different thing. Hence just as, when one reflected image of the sun trembles, another reflected image does not on that account tremble also; so, when one soul is connected with actions and results of actions, another soul is not on that account connected likewise. There is therefore no confusion of actions and results. And as that "appearance" is the effect of Nescience, it follows that the *saṃsāra* which is based on it (the appearance) is also the effect of Nescience, so that from the removal of the latter there results the cognition of the soul being in reality nothing but Brahman. (Thibaut 1980:II, 68–69)[5]

The plurality of reflections of the same self is compared to the sun reflected in several reflecting substances and might have been inspired by the Upaniṣadic story examined in the first chapter of the present study, in which Prajāpati

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[3] Timalisna discusses the different ways in which Śaṅkara and other Advaitins use the term *ābhāsa* (2017:55–56). He notices the following difference between *ābhāsa* and *pratibimba*: ". . . *avidyā* is often identified as *ābhāsa* but never as *pratibimba*. This again confirms that *ābhāsa* refers only to the substrate (*upādhi*), which is not the case with *pratibimba*" (56).

[4] E.g., in Upad.1.5.4, 1.12.6, 1.18.32–33,40–46, 87; BUBh 1.4.7, 4.3.7, 3.2.20–21; ChUBh 6.3.2; TUBh 2.6; BSBh 2.3.50, 3.2.18; PUBh 6.2.

[5] *ābhāsa eva caiṣa jīvaḥ parasyātmano jalasūryakādivat pratipattavyaḥ/ na sa eva sākṣāt/nāpi vastvantaram/ ataś ca yathā naikasmiñ jalasūryake kampamāne jalasūryakāntaraṃ kampate, evaṃ naikasmiñ jīve karmaphalasaṃbandhini jīvāntarasya tatsaṃbandhaḥ/ evam apy avyatikara eva karmaphalayoḥ/ ābhāsasya cāvidyākṛtatvāt tadāśrayasya saṃsārasyāvidyākṛtatvopapattir iti/ tadvyudāsena ca pāramārthikasya brahmātmabhāvasyopadeśopapattiḥ/, BSBh 2.3.50.*

demonstrated that the same self can be reflected in several locations. It is also plausible that Śaṅkara's model was influenced by Bhartṛhari.

Śaṅkara's application of the reflection model allows him to establish the relation of one self to the illusory plurality of individual selves. The former self is real, and the latter are mere appearances. Another upshot of the logical possibility that the same thing can be reflected in several locations is that it provides the solution to the problem of individual liberation. Maṇḍana and Vācaspati put the problem in following terms: if there were only one self, it would follow that liberation of one individual must simultaneously be liberation for all, which is implausible (Potter 1965:168). However, as Śaṅkara points out, "as when one reflected image of the sun trembles, another reflected image does not on that account tremble also; so, when one soul is connected with actions and results of actions, another soul is not on that account connected likewise" (Thibaut 1980:68).[6] Actions and their results in the realm of *saṃsāra* are superimposed on the reflections of the self, while the real self is always already liberated. The removal of ignorance from a particular individual does not affect other "reflections."

In his commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (TUBh 2.6), Śaṅkara discusses the Upaniṣadic passage, where *brahman* is said to multiply itself and enter its own creation. He quotes an opponent arguing that there is no conceivable way in which *brahman*, the undifferentiated cause of the phenomenal world, may enter its own creation. It is impossible for the universal self to enter the individual inner organ:

> If it be said that one cause *brahman* became the receptacle, body, etc., and also that which is contained, the *jīvātman* within, we still say that cannot be; because it is only the thing outside that can be said to enter. [. . .] If it be said that there may be entrance, as in the reflection of the sun in water, it cannot be, because of its unlimitedness and formlessness. There can be a reflection of one finite, corporeal thing into another clear surface like water. But there can be no reflection of *ātman*, because it is formless and not circumscribed, being the cause of *ākāśa* etc. Entrance in the form of reflection is impossible, since there is nothing else which can reflect, nor any space, other than that which it occupies. (Sastri 1923:143–144)[7]

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[6] *ataś ca yathā naikasmiñ jalasūryake kampamāne jalasūryakāntaraṃ kampate, evaṃ naikasmiñ jīve karmaphalasaṃbandhini jīvāntarasya tatsaṃbandhaḥ*, BSBh 2.3.50.
[7] *bāhyāntarbhedena pariṇatam iti cet tad eva kāraṇaṃ brahma śarīrādyādhāratvena tadantarjīvātmanā ādheyatvena ca pariṇatam iti cet, na, bahiṣṭhasya praveśopapatte/* [. . .]

Śaṅkara suggests that the entrance of *brahman* into the inner organ is like the "entrance" of the face into the mirror. There is no actual physical penetration of the transcendental self into the embodied existence, only the appearance of its reflected image. The opponent, however, makes two objections against the appropriateness of the reflection metaphor as applied to *brahman*. First, the pure self cannot be the prototype of reflection as it has no form and is infinite. Second, there is no substance separate from *brahman*, in which it could be reflected.

The first point concerning the self's non-reflectability is quoted in various sources. We have seen a somewhat similar view expressed in the ChU, where Prajāpati demonstrated that the conscious self having no form and no body cannot be reflected. Other philosophers have raised similar objections. Thus, Vācaspati, who has propounded a theory of reflection in his writings on Sāṃkhya and Yoga, criticizes it in his writings on Advaita and Nyāya. In his *Bhāmatī*, Vācaspati repeats the claim made by Śaṅkara's opponent that the formless *brahman* cannot be reflected (*Bhāmatī* 1938:7–8). This seems to remain the standard point of criticism of *pratibimbavāda* by *avacchedavāda,* as can be seen from Appaya Dīkṣita's (about 1550 AD) summary of the latter's objection:

> The reflection of what is not conditioned by colour-form does not stand to reason; much more is this so in the case of what is altogether without color (i.e., Pure Consciousness). (Shima 2000:35)[8]

The argument of the self's non-reflectability can be equally turned against the dualist theories of reflection in Sāṃkhya-Yoga and against the non-dualist theories of reflection in Advaita. The second objection quoted by Śaṅkara, regarding the absence of a reflecting entity separate from *brahman*,[9] specifically targets the Advaita theory.

Śaṅkara prefers not to deal with the two points of criticism directly, but emphasizes, instead, that *brahman*'s entry into the inner organ is metaphorical. He points out that the only way to reach liberating union with *brahman*

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jalasūryakādipratibimbavat praveśaḥ syāditi cet, na, aparicchinnatvād amūrtatvāc ca/ paricchinnasya mūrtasyānyasya anyatra prasādasvabhāvake jalādiṣu sūryakādipratibimbodayaḥ syāt, na tv ātmana, amūrtatvāt, ākāśādikāṅgasya ātmana vyāpakatvāt/ tadviprakṛṣṭadeśapratibimbādhāravan tv antarābhāvāc ca pratibimbavat praveśo na yuktaḥ/, TUBh 97,3–14, on TU 2.6.

  [8] *rūpānupahitapratibimbo na yuktaḥ sutarāṃ nīrūpe*, SLS 18.
  [9] *vastv antareṇa viprakarṣānupapatteḥ*, BUBh 1.4.7.

recognized in the *Upaniṣad*s is through the self, experienced within the cavity of one's heart. Thus, the analogies are utilized with the soteriological purpose in view to direct the seeker of liberation to realize unity of *brahman* with an individual (TUBh 98–99). Śaṅkara repeats the same argument in BUBh 1.4.7 and continues: "the perceptibility [of the self] located in [its] effect is called metaphorically 'entering.'" (Mādhavānanda 1950:122, amended).[10]

In the BSBh, Śaṅkara defends the analogy of reflection on the following grounds:

> The parallel instance (of the sun's reflection in the water) is unobjectionable, since a common feature—with reference to which alone the comparison is instituted—does exist. Whenever two things are compared, they are so only with reference to some intended aspect/feature [they have in common]. Entire equality of the two can never be demonstrated; indeed if it could be demonstrated there would be an end of that particular relation which gives rise to the comparison. (Thibaut II.158–159, amended)[11]

It is indeed impossible to find any analogy that would fully correspond to the subject case. What is important is that there is a target feature of the subject case, which is the same as a feature of the analogue case. Bādarāyaṇa, the *sūtrakāra*, argues that such a target feature common to *brahman* and the sun is "the participation in increase and decrease." Śaṅkara explains:

> But what here is the intended similarity? The reflected image of the sun dilates when the surface of the water expands; it contracts when the water shrinks; it trembles when the water is agitated; it divides itself when the water is divided. It thus participates in all the attributes and conditions of the water; while the real sun remains all the time the same. Similarly *brahman*, although in reality uniform and never changing, participates as it were in the attributes and states of the body and the other limiting adjuncts within which it abides; it grows with them as it were, decreases with them as it were, and so on. As thus the two things compared possess certain

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[10] *tasmāt kāryasthasya upalabhyatvam eva praveśa ity upacaryate*, BUBh 1.4.7.
[11] *yukta eva tv ayaṃ dṛṣṭānto vivakṣitāṃśasaṃbhavāt /na hi dṛṣṭāntadārṣṭrāntikayoḥ kvacit kañcid vivakṣitāṃśaṃ muktvā sarvasārūpyaṃ kenacid darśayituṃ śakyate /sarvasārūpye hi dṛṣṭāntadārṣṭrāntikabhāvoccheda eva syāt /*, BSBh 3.2.20.

common features no objection can be made to the comparison. (Thibaut II.159)[12]

Śaṅkara considers the metaphor of reflection to be a technical philosophical tool known as an "example" or "illustration" (*dṛṣṭānta*). The only purpose of *dṛṣṭānta* is ascertaining similarity between the subject case and the analogue case to make the target feature clear to an "ordinary man." *Dṛṣṭānta* does not aim at proving or establishing anything and must be used to make a single point (Jha 1999:341–343, on *NSBh* 1.1.25.). The only reason (at least in this context) for using the metaphor of the sun's reflection in the water is to illustrate *brahman*'s immutability in the face of the apparent modifications in the limiting adjuncts of our bodies, minds, etc.

The commentators following the lineage of Śaṅkara, however, have suggested some solutions as to how the formless self can be reflected after all. Usually, they point to the examples of other formless entities known from the ordinary experience, which can be reflected. Such examples include the ether, or the sky reflected as a background for the clouds in the water, sound reflected as an echo, etc. (SLS II.14,5–24; PPV 65,18–22).

I could not find any direct response to the objection that the self requires a separate reflecting entity in order to be reflected, which is a metaphysical impossibility in Advaita. We might notice, however, that in some cases, Śaṅkara applies his reflection analogy not to the transcendent *brahman*, but rather to the "witness" (*sākṣin*) or the "overseer" (*adhyakṣa*) (Upad. 1.18.116; BSBh 2.18.94; MUBh 2.2.4).[13] In general, these terms denote not the pure consciousness *in itself*, but rather pure consciousness *in relation to* phenomenal experience. *Sākṣin* may refer either to *īśvarasākṣin* (*brahman* in its role as the overseer of all phenomena) or to *jīvasākṣin* (the witness of phenomena as presented by an individual inner organ).[14] In these cases, the prototype of reflection is not formless *brahman*, but *brahman* as a seer, and it is reflected in individual bodies that appear as separate. The model of reflection cannot be applied to a single undifferentiated reality, but it can be applied to

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[12] *kiṃ punar atra vivakṣitaṃ sārūpyam iti /tad ucyate—vṛddhihrāsabhāktvam iti /jalagataṃ hi sūryapratibimbaṃ jalavṛddhau vardhate jalahrāse hrasati jalacalane calati jalabhede bhidyata ity evaṃ jaladharmānuyāyi bhavati na tu paramārthataḥ sūryasya tathātvam asti /evaṃ paramārthato 'vikṛtam ekarūpam api sad brahma dehādyupādhy antarbhāvād bhajata ivopādhidharmān vṛddhir hrāsādīn /evam ubhayor dṛṣṭāntadārṣṭāntikayoḥ sāmañjasyād avirodhaḥ/*, BSBh 3.2.20.
[13] Gupta understands the distinction between *sākṣin* and pure consciousness in terms of two different roles played by the same entity (2003:113).
[14] On Śaṅkara's usage of the concept of *sākṣin*, see Gupta 1998:33–56.

the conditioned aspects of this reality (i.e., individual self and god) perceived from the phenomenal perspective (*vyavahāra*).

On the other hand, the reflecting entity is clearly postulated as ignorance (*avidyā*), or its phenomenal manifestation as name and form (*nāmarūpa*). This entity is not real, although it also cannot be said to be entirely nonexistent; illusory as it is, *avidyā* is obviously experienced. Therefore, the ontological status of *avidyā* in Advaita is stated to be indeterminate (*anirvacanīya*). The attempts to reconcile the ultimate oneness of *brahman* with the illusory cause of the phenomenal reality, however, go far beyond the discussion of the reflection theory, and deal with the metaphysical foundations of the system. Therefore, after having examined Śaṅkara's mirror-model of one *brahman*—many *jīvas*, I am turning now to his adaptation of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga mirror model of consciousness reflected in the intellect.

3.2.2 Śaṅkara's Theory of Reflection in the *Upadeśasāhasrī*

In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, Śaṅkara returns to the analogy of reflection, this time in order to describe the relationship between conscious but inactive self and active but unconscious intellect (*buddhi*). Just like the face is reflected in a mirror, the self is reflected in the intellect in the form of *ahaṃpratyaya* (the "I-notion"), thereby falsely identifying the self with the mental faculty (Upad 1.18.32).

Śaṅkara's mirror-model of consciousness in the *Upadeśasāhasrī* is almost identical to theories of reflection of the self in the intellect in Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Śaṅkara applies his reflection analogy to explain the process of cognition in the ways remarkably similar to those discussed in the previous chapter. The self is the knower, but being inactive, it cannot be the subject of the verbal predicate "he knows" (*jānāti*). Neither can "he knows" refer to the intellect because the locus of knowledge must be the self. Thus, "he knows" is the result of the false superimposition of the intellect on the self and vice versa. This mutual superimposition is like the false identity between the face and its reflection in a mirror. Śaṅkara explains:

> The face is indeed thought by men to be the same as the face in a mirror, for the reflection of the face is seen to be of the form of the face. And because they do not discriminate between this [*ātman*] which becomes falsely manifest in that [intellect] and that [intellect] in which this [*ātman*] becomes

falsely manifest, all people naturally use the verb "*jānāti.*" Superimposing the agency of the intellect [upon *ātman*], [they] say that the knower "knows." In like manner superimposing the pure consciousness [of *ātman* upon the intellect], [they] say in this world that the intellect is the knower. (Mayeda 1992:179)[15]

The identity perceived between one's face and its reflected image in the mirror is the result of mutual superimposition of the properties of the face and the properties of the mirror. Similarly, the identity between the knower (pure consciousness) and the locus of cognitive activity (the intellect) is the result of the false superimposition of the properties of each entity upon the other.

While Vācaspati's theory of reflection in Sāṃkhya and Yoga has been influenced by that of Śaṅkara, it is also obvious that Śaṅkara had as his sources either Vindhyavāsin's reflection theory, or Bhartṛhari's reflection theory, or both. The *Upadeśasāhasrī* version of the reflection theory is hardly non-dualist, insofar as it aims at explaining how the self and the intellect—ontologically distinct entities—interact and transfer their properties to each other. One important difference, however, between Sāṃkhya-Yoga and Śaṅkara is that in the former, both the self and the intellect are real, and for the latter only the self is real. The intellect, being a manifestation of ignorance (*avidyā*), has an ontologically indeterminate status (*anirvacanīya*), and the reflection of the self must be unreal (Upad 1.18.87).

What does this mean for the self to be reflected in the intellect in the form of the "I-notion?" How does consciousness, along with its mental representation, appear in our mind? In the Upad, Śaṅkara presents a well-developed theory of self-ideation, which involves cognitive and semantic aspects. The real prototype of our idea of a self is the pure consciousness directly perceived as the subject of experience. In several of his writings, Śaṅkara attempts to prove the existence of a self in the ways reminiscent of Descartes's *cogito* argument: "the interior self is well known to exist on account of its immediate (intuitive) presentation" (Thibaut 1980:I.5).[16] "The witnessing self is self-proved and cannot be denied" (Thibaut 1980:I.423–424).[17] "An adventitious thing, indeed, may be refuted, but not that which is the essential nature

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[15] *ādarśamukhasāmānyaṃ mukhasyeṣṭaṃ hi mānavaiḥ /mukhasya pratibimbo hi mukhākāreṇa dṛśyate // yatra yasyāvabhāsas tu tayor evāvivekataḥ /jānātīti kriyāṃ sarvo loko vakti svabhavataḥ // buddheḥ kartṛtvam adhyasya jānātīti jña ucyate /tathā caitanyam adhyasya jñatvaṃ buddher ihocyate //*, Upad 1.18.63–65.

[16] *aparokṣatvāc ca pratyag ātmaprasiddheḥ* (BSBh 1.1).

[17] *svayaṃ siddhasya ca sākṣiṇo 'pratyākhyeyatvāt*, BSBh 2.2.28.

(of him who attempts the refutation); for it is the essential nature of him who refutes. The heat of a fire is not refuted (i.e., sublated) by the fire itself" (Thibaut 1980:II.14).[18] In the PrUBh 6.2., Śaṅkara argues against the "nihilist" (*vaināśika*)[19] position, according to which the rejection of objects of knowledge as existing in reality implies also the rejection of the act of knowledge, which depends on its objects. Śaṅkara, who holds that consciousness is identical with knowledge and independent from the objects of cognition, raises a question: by which means can the nonexistence of knowledge be known? The nihilist position is self-contradictory as one may not know the absence of knowledge. In other words, the cognizing self must be present in every act of cognition, even if this act is aimed at rejecting the possibility of cognition. It should be noted, however, that as opposed to Descartes, Śaṅkara does not identify the self with the cognitive contents or cognitive activity (thinking), which are attributed to the material mental faculty. The self, just like in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, is pure consciousness devoid of intentionality. Nevertheless, there is no knowledge of objects without the reflection of the self in the mental faculty, and as such, it is the very condition of all cognitive events and cannot be doubted.[20]

Śaṅkara establishes the existence of the self not only based on direct perception, but also on the basis of a transcendental deduction, very similar to that of Kant. Kant has argued that all experience necessarily requires the presence of unchanging and unified consciousness:

> Now no cognitions can occur in us, no connection and unity among them, without that unity of consciousness that precedes all data of the intuitions, and in relation to which all representation of objects is alone possible. This pure, original, unchanging consciousness I will now name transcendental apperception. (Kant 1999:232, A107)[21]

For Kant, no awareness of the manifold of intuition in the form of objects that exist in relation to each other is possible without its being unified in one consciousness. Similarly, for Śaṅkara, the existence of a distinct perceiver of multiplicity is the very condition of the phenomenal experience (BSBh

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[18] *āgantukaṃ hi vastu nirākriyate na svarūpam /ya eva hi nirākartā tad eva tasya svarūpam /na hy anger auṣṇyam agninā nirākriyate /*, BSBh 2.3.7.

[19] By *vaināśika*, Śaṅkara usually refers to Buddhism in general (Mayeda 1992:21). The *vaināśika* position expressed here represents Yogācāra, in particular Dharmakīrti.

[20] Also see Gupta 1991:58.

[21] On Kant's unity of apperception, also see 1999:246, B132–252, BB143.

2.2.28, 2.2.31; Upad. 1.18.121–123). In his refutation of the Yogācāra doctrine of *ālayavijñāna*, the repository of mental impressions, Śaṅkara argues:

> If you maintain that the so-called internal cognition (*ālayavijñāna*) assumed by you may constitute the abode of the mental impressions, we deny that, because that cognition also being admittedly momentary, and hence non-permanent, cannot be the abode of impressions any more than the quasi-external cognitions (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*). For unless there exists one continuous principle equally connected with the past, the present, and the future, or an absolutely unchangeable (self) which cognizes everything, we are unable to account for remembrance, recognition, and so on, which are subject to mental impressions dependent on place, time, and cause. (Thibaut I.426–427)[22]

Śaṅkara presents a lengthy argument for the continuous existence of consciousness in all three states—wakefulness, dreaming state and deep sleep (BSBh 3.2.1–3.2.18). Briefly put, consciousness is present in all these states, because we remember them, which proves that we were conscious of these states when they occurred. While it might seem to us that during deep sleep we are unconscious, it is the absence of objects of cognition—real, imagined, or remembered—that is responsible for the state of not being conscious of anything (Upad. 1.18.97; 2.2.90–93). Nevertheless, pure consciousness is still there, because we remember its state of bliss testified by us saying "I have slept well." Gupta summarizes the argument as follows:

> The point that the Advaitins are trying to make, however, is this: one can only remember what has been experienced in the past. The presence of consciousness in sleep is as indubitable as its presence in the waking and dreaming states of consciousness. Accordingly, the Advaitins maintain that consciousness is an invariant in all three states. These states themselves are variant—that is, they come and go—but there is an invariant that spans these states. What is constantly present in these states, apperceiving even their sequence, is consciousness in its aspect as the witness. (Gupta 1991:61)

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[22] *yad apy ālayavijñānaṃ nāma vāsanāśrayatvena parikalpitaṃ tad api kṣaṇikatvābhyupagamād anavasthitasvarūpaṃ satpravṛttivijñānavan na vāsanānām adhikaraṇaṃ bhavitum arhati /nahi kālatrayasaṃbandhiny ekasminn anvayiny asati kūṭasthe vā sarvārthadarśini deśakālanimittāpekṣa vāsanādhānasmṛtipratisaṃdhānādivyavahāraḥ saṃbhavati /*, BSBh 2.2.31.

After establishing the existence of a unitary unchanging self, Śaṅkara demonstrates through the metaphor of reflection how the real self appears in the intellect in the form of an idea. The self is reflected in the intellect (*buddhi*), because "the intellect, being transparent and next to the self easily catches the reflection (shadow) of the light of self's consciousness" (Mādhavānānda's translation with my own revisions, in 1950, p. 612).[23] The self's reflection in the intellect gives rise to two different ideas (*pratyaya*s)—the notion "I" (*aham*) denoting the self (*ātman*) and the notion "mine" (*mama*) denoting everything which belongs or is attributed to the self (*ātmīya*) (Upad. 1.18.27). Śaṅkara emphasizes that the self is not directly indicated by any word (such as the "I"), because syntactic forms such as universals (*jāti*) or actions (*karma*) are not applicable to it. Putting it differently, no word describing the self can have any sense (as opposed to reference), because the self is undifferentiated and not "open" to relations with syntactic units and thus cannot be represented in language. We can express the self only indirectly through the reference to the intellect in which the reflection of the self is found.

The I-notion, thus, is not a mental copy of the self, but from the start the intellect as the self, the self mentalized and conceptualized. While the self appears as the object of the I-notion (*ahaṃpratyayaviṣaya*) (Upad. 2.52–53; BSBh 1.1), some additional element, some false identity is necessarily added to it. The "I" cannot be imagined in its pure "I-ness," but some "am-ness" must be added to it, such as "I am this body," "I am the mind," etc. (Upad 2.2.54). Due to the intellect's function of ascertainment (*adhyavasāya*), the idea of the self assumes propositional form; it becomes open to syntactic relations with other ideas. These imaginary relations are dictated by the linguistic structure through which the intellect operates. The self is imagined to be the subject of some action (*karomi*) (Upad 1.18.6), because the subject of a sentence demands to be predicated. Thus, the idea of a self is necessarily a complex and false idea combining subject-hood and activity. Śaṅkara calls this false idea *ahaṃkartṛ* (Upad 1.14.24, 1.18.20, 1.18.65), the "agent-self," which indicates the intellect having the reflection of the self.

There is, however, a different notion of the self. This notion is "I am the existent" (*sadasmi*) (Upad 1.18.7). This notion is born from the direct *cogito*-like awareness of oneself. The linguistic structure of the intellect forces us to think of the self in a propositional form, as if splitting the self into the subject

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[23] *buddhis tāvat svacchatvād ānantaryāc cātmacaitanyajyotiḥpraticchāyā bhavati /*, BUBh 4.3.7. See also Upad 1.18.27.

(the "I") and its predicate (the "existent"). In our experience of the self, however, the givenness of the self and its existence are inseparable.[24] Thus, the idea of the existing self is a true and complex idea—complex not in the sense that it represents a synthesis of components, but as a thought that can be analyzed into distinct terms.

Although the idea "I am the existent" represents the direct experience of the self, the occurrence of this idea in the intellect causes the intellect to substitute the pure self with its reflection in the intellect. The subject of the sentence is falsely taken to be the intellect itself, and hence we have the same old business of confusing the self with the intellect, the body, etc. From the Advaita perspective, precisely here lies Descartes's mistake—he has superimposed "the thinking thing," the mental faculty, on the direct awareness of the self's existence.

Thus, even the direct experience of the self may not liberate us from the false superimposition of what is not the self upon the self, because the self is always experienced as something else due to the impact of ignorance manifested through language. In Yoga, the clear observation of reflection of the self in the calm surface of the intellect leads to the subsequent collapse of the intellect and the liberating withdrawal of the self into its own form. For Śaṅkara, however, the seed of semantical misrepresentation of the self in the propositional form of "I am *x*" persists as long as it is not removed by and through language. Therefore, the only way to *mokṣa* is through liberating statements (*māhāvākyas*) contained in the *Upaniṣads* and meant to be heard from a teacher. The scriptures proclaim not only *sadasmi* ("I am the existent"), but also *sadbrahmāham* ("I am the existing *brahman*"), thus ruling out the self's misidentification with anything else (Upad. 1.18.6).

Śaṅkara explains that such sentences as *tat tvam asi* ("thou art that") are intended to exclude from the notion of the "I" everything that is not the "I," thus taking the directly experiencing self back to itself (Upad 1.18.4). A spiritual teacher proclaiming to a student "thou art that" might be repeating the same words coming from a parent of a young child pointing to a child's reflection in a mirror.[25] The parent introduces the child to the false identity with his reflection, with the inescapable addition of "am-ness" to one's self.

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[24] Also see BSBh 3.2.21.

[25] The parental exclamation, "That's you there!" in Lacan's later revisions of the mirror stage signifies not only the presence of the Imaginary in this early phase of the ego's development, but also the presence of the Symbolic register of language and sociality (Johnston 2013a). I will discuss this verbal expression of the ego reflection in the next chapter.

The teacher's role, however, is to remove the reflection from one's nature and let the potentially misleading sentence carry out its proper function—make the addressees understand that only what they experience as the self is the self. While in Yoga liberation is attained through the cessation of the intellect's activity, one might question the efficiency of one's attempts to stop mental activity by meditative effort—itself a mental activity. However, from the Advaita perspective, the intellect operates through language, which organizes cognitions into meaningful relations, and therefore, the right knowledge of self-identity may be grasped through understanding the meaning of the Upaniṣadic sentences. Liberation is achieved not through the psycho-physical transformation of the mental apparatus, as implied in Yoga, but through grasping the meaning of such statements as "thou art that." Whereas the sentence is a manifestation of the syntactic structure of the mental apparatus, it points to a referent external to this system. The separation between the intellect and the self is attained when one understands the meaning of a liberating statement, just like the divorce between two people is accomplished through understanding the meaning of the words coming from an authorized person: "You are no longer married!" As long as I fail to grasp the meaning of the words "thou art that," I still falsely believe that I am a part of the intellect, just like a desperate divorcee believes that "You are no longer married" are mere words. One's realization that the *meaning* of the sentence "thou art that," although expressed through language and by means of the mental apparatus, is not of a mental or linguistic nature, leads to the understanding of one's true nature. Liberating force of the *māhāvākyas* comes both from their semantics and from their performative function.

3.3 Pratibimbavāda

In order to explain the nature of the individual self and its relation to the real self, Śaṅkara identifies the *jīva* not only as reflection (*pratibimba*), but also as appearance (*ābhāsa*) and "limitation" (*avaccheda*). While he usually uses the word *ābhāsa* interchangeably with *pratibimba*, by *avaccheda* he indicates that the individual self is formed as a result of the real self being limited by the inner sense, just as the same ether is enclosed by different pots (Gupta 2011:87). For Śaṅkara, the three concepts are different ways to explain the emergence of individual selves.

The commentators following the lineage of Śaṅkara, however, have often considered the three models to be contradictory, and usually favored one over the others. Eventually, Advaita branched out into three distinct lines of interpretation—the Pratibimavāda (Vivaraṇa), the Ābhāsavāda, and the Avacchedavāda (Bhāmatī).[26] Śaṅkara's direct student Padmapāda (820 CE) is the initiator of the first line of interpretation of Śaṅkara, which later came to be known as the Vivaraṇa, or Pratibimbavāda. While Padmapāda develops Śaṅkara's theory of reflection substantially, he also uses a metaphor of ether limited in a jar, favored by Avacchedavādins. This probably means that he does not see any conflict between these two models (Shima 2000:39). His student Prakāśātman (1000 or 1100 CE), however, puts forward arguments in defense of the reflection model and against the limiting adjunct model.

Under this section I will discuss Padmapāda's development of his master's mirror-model of consciousness and Prakāśātman's attempts to justify this theory as the most accurate representation of the relation between consciousness and the ego. I will also briefly review later versions of reflection theory in Advaita Vedānta summarized in the *Siddhāntabindu* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1500 CE) and the *Siddhāntaleśasaṃgraha* of Appaya Dīkṣita (1550 CE).

3.3.1 Padmapāda's Theory of Reflection

In his *Pañcapādikā*, Padmapāda presents an extensive discussion of his version of theory of reflection and a well-developed theory of the ego (*ahaṃkāra*). In my analysis of Padmapāda's theory of reflection and its role in the formation of the ego, I will primarily rely on the first *varṇaka* of his book—a commentary on Śaṅkara's introduction to the BSBh, the subject of which is mutual superimposition (*adhyāsa*) of the self and of the non-self.

Padmapāda compares the transcendental self reflected in ignorance-substance (*avidyā*) in the form of an individual self to a face reflected

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[26] It should be noted that while the three lines of interpretation are often taken as distinct "schools" split over doctrinal disagreements, there are many question marks over the historical existence of such schools, understood as separate traditions, with institutes and clear affiliation of their followers. It is accurate to speak about three foundational texts, disagreeing over interpretation of several topics in Advaita, as well as about commentaries written on these texts, but we never find Advaitins exclusively associating themselves with one of these traditions. The division into three *vādas*, probably, is the result of much later classifications of views in the doxographies of early modernity. See McCrea 2015:95 and Shima 2000:29–49.

in a mirror and to the moon reflected in the water. His discussion of self-reflection is based on Śaṅkara's reflection theory in the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, with one important difference. Śaṅkara emphasizes the difference between the self and its reflection—the former is real, the latter unreal—while the perceived identity between the two is a mistake of nondiscrimination. For Padmapāda, however, the reflection is indistinct from the self, and therefore is real. It is the perceived distinction between the two (the real face is here, its reflection is there; their mutual position facing each other), which is due to the illusion of ignorance (PP II.I.21,23–22.4; Venkataramiah 1948:72).

In order to understand the reasons behind Padmapāda's revision of his teacher's position in respect to the reality of reflection, we should explain his careful terminological analysis of the concepts, which Śaṅkara had used rather loosely. What does Padmapāda mean when he says that the self's reflection is real and identical with the prototype-self?

The self (*ātman*) is pure consciousness *in itself*, with no reference to limiting adjuncts. When it is perceived as limited by different objects of cognition, it is called "experience" (*anubhava*) (PP II.I.19,5–7; Venkataramiah 1948:62). What happens when the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) limits pure consciousness? Padmapāda continues to define what he means by the inner organ. It is a particular transformation of ignorance-substance (*avidyā*) having powers of cognition (*jñānaśakti*). Other synonyms for *antaḥkaraṇa* include the mind (*manas*), the intellect (*buddhi*), and the possessor of the I-notion (*ahampratyayin*) (PP 20,22–26; Venkataramiah 1948:69).

What is the nature of ignorance-substance, the material cause of the inner organ? In general, in post-Śaṅkara Advaita, *avidyā* is taken as a positive entity, the illusory substance-matter, which evolves into the world as we know it. Ignorance functions through two basic powers—*āvaraṇa* (covering, obscuring) and *vikṣepa* (projecting, dividing). These two powers are responsible for the appearance of *brahman* in two forms: *īśvara* and *jīva*. *Īśvara* uses the projecting power to make the world appear. *Jīva*'s perception of the world in its multiplicity is accounted by the obscuring power (Gupta 2011:53–54).

Padmapāda makes a long list of synonyms for *avidyā*: *nāmarūpa* (name and form)*, avyākṛta* (undeveloped, elementary substance), *māyā* (illusion), *prakṛti* (nature, matter), *agrahaṇa* (non-cognition), *avyakta* (not-manifested), *tamas* (darkness, the inert primary force), *kāraṇa* (cause), *laya* (dissolution), *śakti* (potency), *mahāsupti* (great sleep), *nidrā* (a dream), *akṣara* (imperishable), and *ākāśa* (ether) (PP 20,11–13; Venkataramiah 1948:67). This list reveals quite a bit about the nature of ignorance. Being

prakṛti, it is associated with the material substance from which the phenomenal world emanates. Associated with *agrahaṇa*, it has a cognitive aspect of absence of cognition. As *tamas* it is of the nature of obstruction to knowledge. As *mahāsupti* and *nidrā*, it points to its manifestation during deep sleep—on the one hand containing the seeds of the phenomenal experience, on the other, enveloping the self by complete oblivion. As *śakti* it has two important potencies—the power of concealment (*āvaraṇa*) and the power of projection (*vikṣepa*) (Venkataramiah 1948:67). The first power is responsible for concealing the self; the second projects the non-self upon the self. Such a complex notion of ignorance having both ontological and cognitive dimensions is presumably required to account for the complexity of the phenomenal creation.

However, in order to set the non-differentiated potency of ignorance in motion, the efficient cause in the form of divinity (*īśvara*) is required. *Īśvara* is *brahman* limited by ignorance and assuming a role of creator of all individual selves (*jīvas*). This Aristotelian-like unmoved mover is responsible for the transformation of ignorance, the material cause of the universe, into a particular configuration of the inner sense for each person (PP 20,15–19; Venkataramiah 1948:67–68).

Padmapāda's unique contribution to the philosophy of the ego is his development of the notion of *ahaṃkāra*. We have seen that in Sāṃkhya, *ahaṃkāra* stood for a qualitative transformation of the intellect, followed by a sense of self-identity as this or that being or thing. In this theory, the ego, being entirely a product of material nature, has no connection whatsoever with the pure self.[27] *Ahaṃkāra* is marginalized in Yoga, and practically replaced by *asmitā*, I-am-ness. Śaṅkara rarely makes references to *ahaṃkāra*. While he often refers to the intellect (*buddhi*) as *ahaṃkārtṛ* or *ahaṃkṛt*, it is not entirely clear whether he means that the intellect is the locus of *ahaṃkāra*, or that it is characterized by a false idea of the active agency ascribed to the essentially changeless self (*aham + kārtṛ*). While Mayeda interprets *ahaṃkārtṛ* in the first sense, I believe the context points to the latter, as *ahaṃkārtṛ* is mentioned in relation to superimposition of the notion of agency on the notion of the "I."

It is only possible to speculate about the place of *ahaṃkāra* in Śaṅkara's philosophy. Yet, his vague references to the concept were sufficient for

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[27] On the usages of *ahaṃkāra* in pre-Sāṃkhya sources, see van Buitenen 1957, Biardeau 1965, and Thompson 1997.

Padmapāda to move the concept of the ego center stage. In fact, he calls it "the main pillar of the dancing hall of *saṃsāra*" (Venkataramiah 1948:121).[28] The ego functions as a "knot" (*granthi*) tethering conscious and unconscious elements:

> [. . .] just as in the crystal there exists the [illusory] influence of the *upādhi* (i.e., the limiting adjunct of the nearby flower, the red color of which appears in the crystal), so in the conscious *ātman* there exists the [illusory] influence of *ahaṃkāra*. Hence, since it has the nature of both connected [things, the conscious and the inert], it becomes as if it were a knot so that *ahaṃkāra* is spoken of as *granthi* (a tangle of the conscious and unconscious elements). (Venkataramiah 1948:70, amended)[29]

Padmapāda's characterization of the ego as a knot connecting what is real and conscious with what is illusory and unconscious implies that the ego combines two natures. Thus, Padmapāda criticizes the Sāṃkhya conception of an exclusively material nature of *ahaṃkāra*, as it is not plausible that a material objective entity would give rise to the notion "I am" rather than "it is."

> This should not be thought thus (as the Sāṃkhyas do) i.e., since it is only one of the evolutes of its ground (*viz., pradhāna*) and not implicit in the witness (*sākṣin*) which manifests the *ahaṃkāra*; it (*ahaṃkāra*) has that only (*viz., pradhāna*) as its originator (i.e., material cause). For if it were so, then enjoyment (*bhoktṛtva*) which is its (*ahaṃkāra*'s) essential property, deprived of all relation to the witness would manifest itself as "the this" only. But it is not so. (Venkataramiah 1948:68)[30]

Any notion of the "I" must be related to the subject of experience, and in Sāṃkhya the sense of I (*ahaṃkāra)* and the subject of experience (*bhoktṛ*, *puruṣa*) are entirely separated. I have already pointed above that for Padmapāda, the pure self does not experience anything. It is said to experience only when conditioned by limiting adjuncts of certain objects, which become the objects of experience. Experience (*anubhava*) is a relational

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[28] *saṃsāraṇṛty aśālāmūlastambho*, PP 35,18.

[29] *tad evaṃ sphaṭikamaṇāv upadhānoparāga iva cidātmany apy ahaṅkāroparāgas tataḥ sambhinnobhayarūpatvād granthir iva bhavatīty ahaṅkāro granthiriti gīyate /*, PP 21,11–13.

[30] *na caivaṃ mantavyam āśritapariṇatibhedatayaivāhaṃkārasya nirbhāse 'nantarbhūtaiva tan nimittam iti tathā saty apākṛtāhaṃkṛtisaṃsargo bhotṛtvādis tadviśeṣaḥ kevalam idantayaivāvabhāseta na ca tathā samasti/*, PP 20,20–22.

category supervenient upon the limiting adjuncts of experiencing subject and experienced objects illuminated by pure consciousness. The notion of the ego (*ahaṃkāra*), without its reference to consciousness, cannot include the idea of the I, because the source of such an idea is the pure self.

Padmapāda explains other attributes of the ego as follows:

> And of this *avidyā,* the *ahaṃkāra* is a particular transformation resulting from its having *parameśvara* as a controller; it (*ahaṃkāra*) is the substratum of the power of cognition (*jñānaśakti*) and of the power of action (*kriyāśakti*); it is the sole basis of agency and enjoyment; it is a light generated by its association with the unchanging consciousness; it is self-luminous and it is immediate cognition. (Venkataramiah 1948:67–68)[31]

Ahaṃkāra is the substratum of the power of cognition and the power of activity illuminated through the contact of the mental faculty with pure consciousness. It is the result of the mutual superimposition between two ontologically distinct entities—ignorance-substance (qua the inner organ) and pure consciousness. *Ahaṃkāra* is composed of two parts: the "this part" (*idamaṃśa*), the mind proper, the evolute of ignorance-substance; and the "not-this part" (*anidamaṃśa*), the reflection of immediately known pure consciousness (PP 20,15–19; Venkataramiah 1948:68).

Thereby Padmapāda rectifies the Sāṃkhya theory of reflection, in which the ego was not involved in the reflection of the self in the intellect. Instead, he posits the ego as the direct result of the entanglement between the intellect and consciousness. His notion of the ego as a knot between the I and the non-I is much closer to the Yoga concept of *asmitā*. In Yoga, however, *asmitā* is a relational concept, opening the self to identity with itself, with the intellect, the body, etc. For Padmapāda, however, *ahaṃkāra* is a new entity supervenient upon the illusory identity between the intellect and consciousness.

In this respect, Padmapāda's *ahaṃkāra* also differs from Śaṅkara's *ahaṃpratyaya* (the "I-notion"). *Ahaṃpratyaya* is the result of the confusion between two separate ideas—the idea of directly experienced self and the idea of agency. In this sense, like *ahaṃkāra*, it is also composed of "this" and "not-this." *Ahaṃpratyaya* is a false idea, a mental construct, caused by the

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[31] *tasyāḥ   parameśvarādhiṣṭhitatvalabdhapariṇāmaviśeṣo   vijñānakriyāśaktidvayāśrayaḥ kartṛtvabhoktṛtvaikādhāraḥ   kuṭasthacaitanyasaṃvalanasaṃjātajyotiḥ   svayaṃ   prakāśamāno 'parokśo 'haṅkāro,* PP 20,15–18.

interaction between the reflection of the self and the intellect's activity, but it essentially belongs to the intellect. *Ahaṃkāra*, on the other hand, is not an idea, but a separate entity of a mixed ontological nature. While for Śaṅkara, *ahaṃpratyaya* is an aspect or a modification of the intellect, for Padmapāda, the intellect is one component of *ahaṃkāra*. This is the reason that in Śaṅkara's theory of reflection, the main story is that of the interaction between consciousness and the intellect, while for Padmapāda, the role of the intellect is relatively insignificant.

At this point, it becomes clear why Padmapāda goes against his teacher's view and insists that the self's reflection is real and identical with the prototype. The "real" (*sat*), according to Padmapāda, means "that which cannot be sublated." The nature of mistake, like in a case of taking a mother of pearl for silver, is that we apprehend something (the silver) where it is not (mother of pearl). The unreality of the mistaken apprehension is recognized, when a sublating cognition takes place ("this is a mother of pearl"). *Ahaṃkāra* is an illusory entity insofar as consciousness is attributed to the inner sense, because this superimposition may be sublated by the liberating knowledge "thou art that (*ātman*, and not the inner sense)." However, insofar as *ahaṃkāra* is held to be identical with consciousness because it is its reflection, no sublating knowledge can take place. My recognition "this is me" when pointing to my face in a mirror is not sublated by the removal of the mirror. The snake immediately disappears, once I recognize that it is a rope, but my face does not disappear when the mirror is removed. The face does not appear in the mirror, but it continues to exist as the prototype—the real face. Similarly, the association between the reflection of the self and the inner sense ceases upon hearing liberating statements, but the identity of the reflection of the self with the self does not cease. Padmapāda points out that the liberating statement "thou art that" is a statement of identity of the "thou" (the individual self) with the "that" (*brahman*); it is not a negation of identity:

> There (in the sentence) "Thou art That!" what is intimated is that the individual self (*jīva*) which is in the position of the reflected image (*pratibimba*) is of the nature of *brahman* occupying the position of the prototype (*bimba*). Otherwise the sentence would not be "Thou art That!" but would be "Thou art not!" like "silver is not." (Venkataramiah 1948:74, amended)[32]

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[32] *tatra tattvam iti bimbasthānīyabrahma svarūpatā pratibimbasthānīyasya jīvasyopdiśyate 'nyathā na tattvam asīti syāt kintu na tvamasīti bhaven na rajatam astītivat/*, PP 22,21–23.

Only if the identity between the self and its reflection is admitted, the Upaniṣadic liberating statement "Thou art That" (*tat tvam asi*) can be true. Since the pronoun "thou" refers to the individual self—the subject of the sentence, and the "that"—the object of the sentence—refers to *brahman*, the identity between the two expressed by the "art" can be true only if the subject is really non-distinct from the object. Otherwise, if the ultimate self is distinct from the individual self, it should have been stated "Thou art not," like "silver is not."

Padmapāda's theory of identity between the prototype and its reflection is a further step in the "monisation" of reflection. Śaṅkara inherits the original dualism of a metaphor of reflection from Sāṃkhya, with its emphasis on discrimination between the intellect and the self. Padmapāda is more consistent with the doctrine of non-duality of being, and for him there is a real identity of a single self with its individual reflections. The importance of this difference could be seen in Padmapāda's response to the opponent who points out that if the self were to refer both to the prototype and its reflection, the absurd conclusion would follow that the same thing can appear in two different locations. While Śaṅkara can ward off the objection by saying that the identity is illusory, Padmapāda's response that the duplication is illusory is stronger from the standpoint of non-dualism (PP 23,6–8; Venkataramiah 1948:75–76).

Another objection brought against *pratibimbavāda* allows Padmapāda to make his theory of reflection more than a metaphor. The opponent points out that even one's realization that the reflection in a mirror is identical with oneself does not end the illusion of separation. If so, how does the realization of identity between the individual and the self bring about liberation? Padmapāda responds that there is a difference between the reflection of the insentient body in a mirror and the reflection of the conscious self. The identity between the body and its reflection cannot bring about liberation because the self is neither of the two. The identity between consciousness and its reflection in the form of the individual self, on the other hand, can be realized by the reflected image (i.e., *ahaṃkāra*) precisely because it is conscious (PP 23,11–20; Venkataramiah 1948:76–77). Prakāśātman comments: the reflection of Devadatta in the pupil of one's eyes is unconscious not because it is a reflection, but because the reflection is of the insentient body, which is no different from the reflection of a pot (PPV 64,3–65, 11).

This distinction between a reflection of a body and a reflection of the self is an important contribution to the theory of reflection. Padmapāda makes it

clear that reflection per se is not different in both cases. It is not a property of physical objects only, but rather a relation of identity-in-difference between any entity and its distinct appearance. Although the locus of a reflection is in the mirror, a reflection is the property of the prototype, not of the mirror, and therefore it is as real as the prototype (PP 22,2–20; Venkataramiah 1948:72–73).

Another interesting objection is raised by a Prābhākara Mīmāṃsāka. The opponent claims that one's reflection in a mirror may be explained by a physical naturalistic account of the rays coming from the prototype and reflecting back from the mirror. Illusion does not exist; in reality, there is only a certain optical phenomenon taking place. Reflection does not exist anywhere, and thus cannot be identical to the prototype. Padmapāda's short answer is that the experience itself goes against such a statement. What he might mean is that reflection certainly appears and thus cannot be said to be non-existent (PP 23,2–4; Venkataramiah 1948:75). Again, one should remember the Advaita definition of the real as that which is not sublated. As long as the reflection is apprehended, and no conflicting cognitions arise, one may not say that the reflection does not exist. This negative account of valid cognition is somewhat similar to that of Karl Popper, for whom the validity of scientific theories is in principle never conclusive. Some theory can be accepted as long as it has not been refuted; once refuted it is no longer valid.

3.3.2   Pratibimbavāda: Later Developments

As I have shown, the distinctive contribution of Padmapāda to the Advaita mirror-model of consciousness was his theory of ego formation, conditioned by conscious and unconscious elements. Padmapāda explains the phenomenal sense of being an individual by consciousness's reflection in the inner sense giving rise to the ego (*ahaṃkāra*). At least in one case, however, instead of *ahaṃkāra*, he uses a different term—*jīva*—to refer explicitly to reflection in the inner sense. He argues that in the statement "thou art that," the "thou" denotes the individual self (*jīva*) who is in the position of the reflected image (*pratibimba*) in respect to the "that," that is, *brahman*, who is in a position of prototype (*bimba*) (PP 22,21–23; Venkataramiah1948:4). He further defines *jīva* as having the nature of consciousness, without being affected by the unconscious nature of the inner sense. Nevertheless, due to the power of ignorance, the *jīva* experiences itself as distinct from

brahman (PP 23,17–20; Venkataramiah 1948:77). Commonly understood, *jīva* stands for the individual self, that is, for consciousness limited by the inner sense, the body, etc. However, this is a mistaken notion as in reality consciousness and the evolutes of the ignorance-substance are entirely separate, and as such, the individual may not be identical with *brahman*. Only insofar as it excludes the non-conscious elements, does the word *jīva* indicate its "not-this" component, which is identical with *brahman* as pure consciousness.

A reflection relationship between *brahman* and *jīva* has already been introduced by Śaṅkara in BSBh 2.3.50, in which he has explained that plurality of *jīvas* are reflections of one *brahman*, just like multiple reflections in different bodies of water belong to the same sun.[33] Śaṅkara defines *jīva* as "the self, having the limiting adjuncts of the body and sense organs which are qualified by ignorance, desire and action" (Comans 2000:238).[34] This definition is quite compatible with that given by Padmapāda, and it seems that in his account of reflection as taking place between *brahman* and *jīva*, Padmapāda does not add anything new to the teaching of his predecessor. In the *Upadeśasāhasrī*, however, Śaṅkara uses the metaphor of reflection to describe the relation between pure consciousness and the intellect, and here Padmapāda allows himself to develop it further into his theory of *ahaṃkāra*.

Padmapāda's commentator Prakāśātman is careful not to deviate from Padmapāda's terminology, and he uses *ahaṃkāra* and *jīva* in the same contexts in which his predecessor had used them, and he also describes *brahman* as a prototype (*bimba*) and *jīva* as a reflected image (*pratibimba*) (PPV 67,193–98, 2). Prakāśātman, however, explicitly, although briefly, relates *jīva* and *ahaṃkāra* by saying that the latter is the limiting adjunct of the first (PPV 66,9–67, 4). While such a definition is slightly different from Śaṅkara's definition, for whom the *jīva* is the self having as its limiting adjuncts the body and the sense organs, the definitions are not incompatible. Given that there are several levels of limiting adjuncts (ignorance, *ahaṃkāra*, the inner sense, the body, etc.), *jīva* may be seen as *brahman*'s reflection conditioned by all of them. Prakāśātman seems to distinguish between *jīva* and *ahaṃkāra*, in order to reinforce the identity of *brahman* with individual

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[33] The often-quoted verse from the *Bālabodhinī* ascribed to Śaṅkara nicely summarizes the relation between *brahman* and *jīva*: *brahman satyaṃ jagan mithyā jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ* ("*Brahman* is the truth, the world is false, *jīva* is *brahman* and nothing else") (Gupta 2011:9).

[34] *avidyākāmakarmaviśiṣṭakāryakaraṇopādhir ātmā saṃsārī jiva ucyate /* (BUBh 3.8.12).

self, which must not be mistaken with *ahaṃkāra* having the aspect of the "not-this."

It is not entirely clear when reflection model of consciousness came to be regarded as the defining doctrine of the Vivaraṇa line of interpretation of Advaita Vedānta, distinguishing it from the rivaling Bhāmatī associated with the limiting adjunct model (*avacchedavāda*). While Vivaraṇa is based on Prakāśātman's writings and Bhāmatī on those of Vācaspati Miśra, these philosophers use both metaphors. It is true that Prakāśātman clearly prefers the analogy of reflection and Vācaspati Miśra the analogy of the limiting adjunct, but both ascribe to each of the two metaphors different complementing purposes.

Thus, Prakāśātman argues that the metaphor of reflection establishes the identity between *brahman* and *jīva*, and the metaphor of the space within a pot establishes the undivided, non-relational nature of the *ātman* (PPV 67,19–68, 11). When the opponent points out the inappropriateness of a dualist metaphor of one entity reflected in another for describing one reality of *brahman*, Prakāśātman repeats Padmapāda's response. Like Śaṅkara, Padmapāda admitted that there are limitations to the metaphor of reflection and emphasized that reflection is only a metaphor. Nevertheless, Padmapāda, together with Prakāśātman, adopts a different approach in respect to the limitations of the reflection metaphor and claims that these limitations are addressed by other metaphors—those of the limiting adjuncts (the crystal and the pot) and the snake-rope metaphor. The metaphors, taken together, describe the relation between *brahman* and *jīva* with utmost precision. The metaphor of reflection catches the identity between *brahman* and the individual self, the rope mistaken for a snake is a metaphor that obviates the need for an additional substance other than *brahman*, and the metaphor of an undivided space illusorily limited by the pot establishes the undivided and non-relational nature of the self (PP 23,11–24, 8; Venkataramiah 1948:77–79).

Despite this positive complementarity of the metaphors, Padmapāda is in agreement with Śaṅkara in that "all these examples are for the purpose of removing the doubt that may arise regarding what has been established by the Scriptures, confirmatory logic and experience, and also for mental comfort; it is not for the sake of directly establishing the thing itself (i.e., *ātman*)" (Shima 2000:39). Padmapāda, like Śaṅkara, regards metaphors as "illustrations" (*udāharaṇa*) intended for easier digestion of difficult ideas, not as kinds of proofs (PP 24,6–8; Venkataramiah 1948:79). Prakāśātman briefly adds that

"a thing cannot be established by examples alone without a *pramāṇa*, because of the possibility of counter-examples" (Gupta 2011:361).[35]

Although Prakāśātman admits that counterexamples are possible, he suggests that some examples are more successful than others. He points out that the metaphor of a space surrounded by a pot is problematic when applied to *brahman* as it suggests that *brahman* actually turns into two distinct entities—one found within the limiting adjunct and the other is outside of it. It thus ceases to be all pervasive and the controller of all. Instead, Prakāśātman presents his own metaphor of reflection: *brahman* is reflected in the limiting adjunct like ether is reflected in the water.

> Because, just as ether, although it has no form, has its reflection in the water along with the clouds and stars, so can there be the reflection of the *brahman*. For in water which is but knee-deep there is seen (the reflection of) the distant and pervasive ether; for it is not possible to say that it is only the space which is in the water that is seen associated with the (reflected) images of clouds, etc. (Gupta 2011:353, amended)[36]

Prakāśātman argues that his analogy manages to avoid the problem of divisiveness of *brahman* associated with the model of the pot and the ether:

> On the reflection theory, however, we see although the space is naturally present in the water, yet the reflected space is also seen. Thus the duplication of existence is intelligible; hence, among those which condition the empirical individual, the presence of the *brahman* as controller, etc., is intelligible. Thus, the reflection theory alone is superior. (Gupta 2011:354)[37]

The water both occupies a certain inner space and reflects the external space. Thus, the contact between the unconditional *brahman* and the conditioned *brahman* is preserved (*PPV* 1892:65,12–66, 8). In other words, if the metaphor of limiting adjuncts is meant to illustrate the undivided nature of the

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[35] *pramāṇam antareṇodāharaṇamātrād arthasiddhy ayogāt praty udāharaṇasambhavād iti bhāvaḥ*, PPV 68,10–11.

[36] *amūrtasya cākāśasya sābhranakṣatrasya jale pratibimbavad amūrtasya brahmaṇo 'pi pratibimbasambhavāt/ jānumātrapramāṇe 'pi jale dūraviśālākāśadarśanāt/ jalāntarākāśa evābhrādipratibimbayukto dṛṣyata iti vaktum aśakyatvāt/*, PPV 65,18–20.

[37] *pratibimbapakṣe tu jalagatasvābhāvikākāśe saty eva pratibimbākāśadarśanād ekatraiva dvigṇīkṛtya vṛtty upapatte jīvāvacchedeṣu brahmaṇo 'pi niyantṛtvādirūpeṇāvasthānam upapadyate iti pratibimbapakṣa eva śreyān iti/*, PPV 66,3–5.

self, the metaphor of reflection does this better. It is not clear, however, why separation between the space outside the pot and inside the pot is more real than separation between space inside and outside the water, even if the water reflects the external space. Perhaps, Prakāśātman interprets Padmapāda's argument that reflection is real and is the property of the prototype in the sense that the external space actually enters the water in the form of reflection.

In order to appreciate further developments in post-Prakāśātman theories of reflection, it can be useful to look at the summaries of the main tenets of these positions in *Siddhāntabindu (SB)* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (1500 CE) and *Siddhāntaleśasaṃgraha* of Appaya Dīkṣita (1550 CE). Madhusūdana defines the position of the followers of Prakāśātman as follows: "*īśvara* (god) is prototype-consciousness conditioned by ignorance, *jīva* is consciousness reflected in ignorance particularized in the inner organ through its mental impressions (my translation)."[38] While we have seen that Prakāśātman, following Śaṅkara and Padmapāda, has persistently regarded *brahman* as the prototype of reflection, Madhusūdana ascribes Prakāśātman's proponents the view that *īśvara* is the prototype of reflection. Appaya Dīkṣita describes the Vivaraṇa position in the same terms: ". . . the reflection is the *jīva*; what is in the position of the prototype is *īśvara*" (Sastri 1935:I.169, amended).[39] It should be noted that Appaya Dīkṣita ascribes this position not directly to Prakāśātman, but to his followers (*vivaraṇānusāriṇaḥ*). Thus, we might assume that Prakāśātman's theory of reflection has been modified by later commentators and advocates in order to distinguish their position from the new competing theories of reflection, also described by Madhusūdana and Appaya Dīkṣita.

One of these competing positions is attributed by Madhusūdana and Appaya Dīkṣita to Sarvajñātman (900 CE) and his followers, according to whom, *īśvara* is the reflection of pure consciousness in one ignorance-substance, and the *jīva* is its reflection in the intellect. Appaya Dīkṣita mentions two other works that present essentially identical positions, namely the *Prakaṭārthavivaraṇa* and the *Tattvaviveka*.[40] What is common to all these positions, in Appaya Dīkṣita's words, is that "in the above-mentioned views

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[38] *ajñānopahitaṃ bimbacaitanyam īśvaraḥ, antaḥkaraṇatatsaṃskārāvacchinnājñānapratibimbitaṃ caitanyaṃ jīvaḥ, iti vivaraṇakārāḥ/*, SB 28,14–15.

[39] *pratibimbo jīvaḥ, bimbasthānīya īśvaraḥ*, SLS II.17, 7.

[40] Appaya Dīkṣita also mentions the third version of theory of reflection presented in the *Citradīpa*, *Brahmānanda*, and *Dṛgdṛśyaviveka*, according to which *īśvara* is the reflected image of pure consciousness. It is not clear in which respect this version is different from the second version (Shima 2000:34, 47, n. 12).

of the *jīva* and *īśvara* as varieties of reflection, *brahman* that is in the position of the prototype, is the pure consciousness, which is attained by the released" (Sastri 1935:I.162, amended).[41] In fact, if we go directly to Sarvajñātman's *Saṃkṣepaśārīraka*, we find that Sarvajñātman renders *īśvara* as a reflected image (*pratibimba*) of the pure consciousness in the ignorance-substance and as the prototype (*bimba*) for *jīva* as its reflected image (*pratibimba*) in the intellect. Sarvajñātman makes a point that *īśvara*, although being consciousness limited by ignorance-substance, is itself free from ignorance in its concealing aspect. In other words, *īśvara* possesses the projecting power of ignorance (*māyā*), that is, the power to delude the individual selves, while itself remaining omniscient. Perhaps, in this sense, the individual self is considered its reflection: *īśvara* creates a limiting adjunct in the form of the intellect and is reflected in it in the form of individually experienced consciousness. The limiting adjunct conceals from the *jīva* knowledge otherwise available to *īśvara* (SŚ 2.176–177; 2.190; 3.277–278).

We have seen that *īśvara* is absent from Śaṅkara's, Padmapāda's, and Prakāśātman's accounts of reflection. All of them invariably render the prototype as *brahman* or the self (*atman*), and its reflected images as *jīvas*. How do they treat *īśvara*? *Īśvara* is often utilized by Śaṅkara to refer to the formal and creative aspect of *saguṇa brahman*, and he defines it as "the self, having as its limiting adjuncts the power of eternal and unsurpassed knowledge" (Comans 2000:238).[42] Padmapāda, at least in one instance, describes the difference between *īśvara* and *jīva*, as well as between different *jīvas* as illusory, like in the case of a double moon appearing to someone with an eye disease (PP 14,5; Venkataramiah 1948:46). Padmapāda also refers to *īśvara* as the efficient cause of the internal sense (PP 20,15–19; Venkataramiah 1948:67–68). In general, however, as Potter rightly points out, "when the question arises as to who exactly God is, Padmapāda turns decidedly evasive" (Potter 1963:176). Prakāśātman rarely refers to *īśvara* explicitly.[43] It is my general impression that for the latter two thinkers, the theology of *īśvara* is relatively unimportant. The relation between *brahman* and *jīva* is their central concern, as well as the development of the plausible non-dualist theory accountable for the phenomenal world of plurality.

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[41] *evam ukteṣv eteṣu jīveśvarayoḥ pratibimbaviśeṣatvapakṣeṣu yad bimbasthānīyam brahma tan muktaprāpyam śuddhacaitanyam* SLS II.14,3–4.

[42] *nityaniratiśayajñānaśaktyupādhir ātmāntaryāmīśvara ucyate*, BUBh 3.8.12.

[43] I have managed to find only one case of mentioning *īśvara* in PPV 69,21–22.

Appaya Dīkṣita explains why the late Vivaraṇavādins postulate *īśvara* as the prototype and *jīva* as the reflected image and reject Sarvajñātman's doctrine. First, on the basis of a theory of a single ignorance-substance, postulated by this line of interpretation, the difference between *īśvara* and *jīva* must be due to a single cause, namely *īśvara*'s reflection in the form of *jīva*. One should not postulate the first reflection of *brahman* as *īśvara*, and the secondary reflection of *īśvara* as *jīva*, because essentially there is only one limiting adjunct (SLS II.17,2–9). This argument is rather unconvincing, as the single ignorance-substance evolves into a multiplicity of *antaḥkaraṇas*, which produce individual reflections. Nothing should prevent *brahman* to be reflected both as *īśvara* bounded by the ignorance-matter and as *jīvas* bounded by multiplicity of *antaḥkaraṇas*, evolved from the same ignorance-matter.

Second, according to Appaya, only if *īśvara* is the prototype and the *jīva* is its reflected image, *īśvara* preserves its independence (*svātantryam*), and *jīva* its dependence on *īśvara* (*tatpāratantryam*). The third related reason is that since the proclaimed motivation of *īśvara* to create and manipulate *jīvas* is playfulness (*līla*), the metaphor of a single reflection is the most fit to describe *īśvara*'s playing with the *jīvas*. The *siddhāntin* quotes from Amalānanda's *Kalpataru*, a commentary on Vācaspati's *Bhāmatī*: "Just as a man plays with the changes, straight, crooked etc., occurring in the reflection, even so does *brahman* with the changes in the *jīva*" (Sastri 1935:I.169, amended).[44]

It seems that while Sarvajñātman is concerned with the relation of *īśvara* with *brahman* and *jīva*, the late *vivaraṇavādins* are worried that the analogy of reflection might lose its effectiveness and elegance, once the relation between two factors—prototype and image—is complicated by the addition of a third factor (a reflection of a reflection). Whatever the reasons behind the polemics between the proponents of one and two reflections are, the substitution of *brahman*-prototype with *īśvara*-prototype indicates the process of theization of theories of reflection in Advaita Vedānta.[45] In fact, during this period, we witness the growing spread of the analogy of reflection between divinity and the individual soul in other traditions as well, such as Kashmiri Śaivism and Madhva's Dvaita-Vedānta.[46]

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[44] *pratibimbagatāh paśyan ṛjuvakrādivikriyaḥ/*
   pumān krīḍed yathā brahman tathā jīvasthavikriyāḥ//, SLS II.2.17,10–11.

[45] These theories bear some resemblance to the widespread Sufi metaphor of the heart as a mirror reflecting God's attributes (see, e.g., Andrews, Black, and Kalpakli 2006:118–121).

[46] On Abhinavagupta's (tenth to eleventh-century) use of the analogy of reflection between Śiva and *ahaṃkāra*, see Lawrence 2005, Kaul 2020, and Ratié 2017. On Madhva's (thirteenth-century)

3.4 Summary

Advaita models of consciousness, although continuous in many ways with the models in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, take a new direction. Śaṅkara utilizes the analogy of reflection for two different purposes. The first is meant to account for the illusory plurality of individual selves. Śaṅkara pursues this goal by adopting Bhartṛhari's theory of reflection and develops it in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* and commentaries on various Upaniṣadic texts. Śaṅkara's second purpose is shared with Sāṃkhya and Yoga: an explanation of the interaction between consciousness and the intellect, as well as of the process through which consciousness is mentally represented. Śaṅkara develops this model in his *Upadeśasāhasrī* to account for the self's illusory participation in phenomenal, perceptive, cognitive, and conative processes. He also responds to criticism over the appropriateness of the model, which assumes at least two entities (the face and the mirror) for describing a reality of absolute non-duality. Śaṅkara admits that the resemblance between the metaphor of reflection and the real interaction between consciousness and the mind is limited, but nevertheless points to the heuristic benefits of the metaphor. As Śaṅkara regards the liberating statement from the Upaniṣads—"thou art that" as a verbal equivalent of one's self-recognition in a reflected image, Śaṅkara's imagery of reflection also has distinctive soteriological implications.

Padmapāda takes Śaṅkara's theory of the self's reflection in the intellect and develops it into his theory of the ego formation. Padmapāda is less interested in the linguistic aspect of reflection; his primary goal is the ontological analysis of *ahaṃkāra*, having as its basis the ignorance-material elements of the mental organ as well as the reflection of pure consciousness. Prakāśātman prioritizes the analogy of reflection over other analogies describing the relation between *brahman* and the *jīva*. Later, the reflectionist school, claiming as its founding fathers Padmapāda and Prakāśātman, replaces this relation by the reflection taking place between *īśvara* and the *jīva*, testifying, among other reasons, to the theization of theories of reflection taking place in philosophical traditions of this period.

As I will show in the next chapter, Advaita models of consciousness have one important advantage over Sāṃkhya-Yoga models—its singularity of

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theory of *bimbapratibimbabhava* between Viṣṇu and *jīva* and the practice of *bimbopāsana*, see Sharma 1986:438–448.

consciousness, which avoids the problem of individuation of selves, having no physical properties whatsoever. On the other hand, Sāṃkhya-Yoga naturalism about mind makes it possible to identify parallels with contemporary philosophy of mind. In the next chapter, after a recourse into Lacan's mirror model of consciousness, I will attempt to formulate a non-reductionist theory of consciousness, based on Advaita theory of one self, Sāṃkhya-Yoga mind-consciousness dualism, and the mirror model of interaction between consciousness and the mind. In a dialogue with Metzinger's representational theory of consciousness, I will defend a plausibility of such a theory, in the light of contemporary debates on consciousness.

4

New Mirrors

Indian Theories of Reflection, Jacques Lacan, and Thomas Metzinger

The intellectual climates, in which Indian mirror models of consciousness have developed, dictated much of the philosophical goals served by these models. Competition with the Buddhists, theorization of soteriological praxis, in some cases the importance of theological and hermeneutical reasoning, have all been in the background of theories of mind and consciousness developed in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta. If one adds to these the metaphysical peculiarities found in these schools, including consciousness-mind dualism, idealist non-dualism, theories of *tattva*s and *guṇas*, theories about the sense organs and the mind traveling outside the human body and "touching" the external objects, the question arises whether theories of reflection may have any currency in contemporary philosophy of consciousness.

The question is not trivial as the critical mass of empirical evidence provided by neuroscience, as well as technological progress in brain research, make us better equipped to measure mental processes, and arguably in a better position to make conclusions about the structure and the functions of the neurophysiological basis of the mind. I admit that in order to find out whether there is any plausibility in Indian mirror models, in the light of what we know today about mind and consciousness, there is no escape from decontextualizing these theories from their historical background and recontextualizing them in the framework of contemporary thought informed by scientific research. The goal is to find out what could be true about Indian theories of consciousness in relation to modern ways of being and thinking, and not only in carefully reconstructed intellectual worlds of premodern India.

To pave the path for Indian mirror models of consciousness into the thickets of modern thought and to avoid embarrassing obstacles, I follow two strategies. My first strategy is to identify contemporary mirror models

of consciousness, with which philosophically interesting dialogue could be undertaken from the perspective of Indian models. As it will become clear, my work will be somewhat simplified by the fact that two contemporary mirror-model theorists, Jacques Lacan and Thomas Metzinger, have already—although briefly—initiated such a dialogue, which has largely gone unnoticed.

For my purposes, Lacan's theory of the mirror stage suggests a model of interaction between subjective and objective, physiological and social elements in the constitution of an individual, mediated by mirror-like interrelations. He also provides a new interpretation of the liberating force of the statement "Thou art that" as the signifier of mirror-like identity of differents. By positing Lacan's theory of the mirror stage in front of the Indian mirror models of consciousness, I aim at extending the discussion of mirror models to include, in addition to consciousness's interaction with the mind and the physical world, also its interrelation with the social world, the world of human others.

My second strategy is not to focus on what is known to modern science about consciousness, but rather on what is unknown or problematic, what remains a puzzle, or what is regarded in analytic philosophy as the "hard problem of consciousness." Whereas I take the project of naturalization of the mind in modern science and analytic philosophy seriously, the difficulty to explain phenomenality of experience in natural terms leaves a plausible possibility that physicalism about the mind reaches its limit precisely here. It is this explanatory gap that makes a theory of consciousness-matter metaphysical dualism, the variations of which are found in Sāṃkhya and Yoga, tenable. I will present consciousness-matter dualism, formulated by Paul Schweizer, Gerald J. Larson, and Roy W. Perrett, and will demonstrate that mirror models of interactions between consciousness and the mind increase the plausibility of this metaphysical position, making it far more competitive and convincing than Cartesian mind-body dualism. In order to avoid the problem of individuation of consciousness independent of matter as well as the unintelligibility of interaction of consciousness with this rather than another mind, I will postulate one consciousness, as in Advaita, instead of many, as in Sāṃkhya. Unlike Advaita, however, this theory is committed to consciousness-matter (including mind) metaphysical dualism.

I also offer an alternative emergentist model of consciousness-matter duality, where consciousness emerges from its metaphysical non-differentiation from matter. Under this theory, consciousness does not exercise causal or

functional power but assumes a phenomenal power, making it irreducible to its material basis, and at the same time capable of casting mirror-like illusion of interaction between the two. Under this theory of emergent consciousness, there is no problem of individuation and no problem of interaction with a particular mind, and thus plurality of consciousnesses is acceptable.

I do not aim, thus, toward scientization of Indian theories of consciousness. Nor do I aim at reducing scientific theories to a new expression of the old wisdom. To some extent, comparison between ancient and new theories of mirror-like reflection is involved, but only in so far as such a comparison sheds a new light on each theory. The overall comparative effort, however, has as its primary goal the demarcation between the scientific sphere, where naturalization of mental processes is pursued, and the sphere of nonintentional phenomenality, where the soteriological project of isolation and independence of consciousness could be realized. The role of mirror models of consciousness is to make the fine stiches, covering the metaphysical gaps between the natural and the phenomenal realms.

4.1 Lacan's Mirror Models

Lacan's engagement with Indian philosophy was by no means deep or systematic, but his occasional references to Hindu and Buddhist ideas suggest more than just instances of fleeting curiosity. Lacan persistently finds parallels between his own thought and Vedic and Buddhist texts throughout his work (Kuberski 1994:117). Thus, he compares between Freud's discussion of children's wordplay and Prajāpati's mysterious utterances depicted in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, finds parallels between psychoanalysis and Buddhism, discusses the Indian aesthetic theory of *dhvani* and holds a lengthy discussion of Japanese Buddhism and the mirror as the "field of the Other" (Lacan 2006:243–244, 254, 260, 265; 2014:220–229).[1]

Whereas Lacan's reference to mirror metaphors in Buddhism already suggests possible links to mirror models of consciousness, some of which originated in India, I find more promising Lacan's choice to summarize the essence of his mirror-stage theory by the Upaniṣadic liberating statement

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[1] Slavoj Žižek is another well-known Lacanian philosopher, who expressed interest in Buddhism—albeit critically and predominantly as a modern Western phenomenon. See Žižek 2001 and 2012:127–135.

"Thou art that." Just like Śaṅkara and Padmapāda, Lacan captures the re-
alization of the mirror-like nature of the ego by the liberating formula and
assigning it a role of the ultimate understanding of the analysand's essential
nature, the climax, and the end of psychoanalytic treatment. As such, I will
treat Lacan's explanation of this formula in the light of his mirror model as
an interpretation alternative to that of Śaṅkara and Padmapāda. This move
sets the stage for reading Lacan's mirror-stage theory as a contemporary non-
Indian mirror model of consciousness, its imaginary relation with the ego, as
well as with the social world.

Lacan bases his theory of the mirror stage on the empirical evidence
suggesting that infants between the ages of six to eighteen months learn to
recognize themselves in a mirror. During this period, human infants are still
found in a biologically premature condition of helplessness and experience
their bodily organs and functions as having no unity. The reflection of the
infant's body provides a unified image to the initially fragmented mental-
physical complex. This reflected image becomes the basis for the imaginary
entity known as the "ego," the object of identity for human consciousness.
Inspired by the findings of the natural and social sciences, Lacan bases his
theory of the ego formation also on Freud's writings, psychoanalytic met-
apsychology, clinical analytic practice, and philosophy both historical and
contemporary.

I propose a new reading of Lacan's theory of the mirror stage as involving a
double reflection somewhat similar to Vijñānabhikṣu's theory of mutual re-
flection: the subject is physically reflected in external mirrors and metaphor-
ically in their symbolic substitutes such as one's parents, while the subject's
external image in the form of the ego is reflected back in the subject, in the
"intra-organic mirror" located in the cerebral cortex. Until now, Lacanian
scholars have largely ignored the second reflection, although Lacan has ex-
plicitly referred to it on several occasions. The reason behind this neglect,
perhaps, is the anti-naturalism of most Lacanians, leading them to turn a
blind eye to Lacan's references to the actual central nervous system.

I will also demonstrate that Lacan's theory of the mirror stage plays an im-
portant role in explaining the causally efficacious interaction between mutu-
ally irreducible categories of nature and society in his earlier writings and of
the interaction between the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real registers[2]

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[2] Lacan's theory of the three registers of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real refers to the
three fundamental dimensions of psychical subjectivity. The Imaginary is associated with the spheres
of consciousness and self-awareness, with how a person imagines oneself and other persons to be.

in his later writings, thereby illuminating interrelations between subjective and objective elements in the formation of the individual.

4.1.1 The First Reflection: The Ego

Lacan presents his thesis of the mirror stage fully in "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" from 1949, although Lacan has already attempted to present his theory thirteen years earlier during the Fourteenth International Psycho-Analytical Congress at Marienbad (Roudinesco 2003:25). The theme of the reflectory nature of the ego, however, is found throughout Lacan's lectures in his *Ecrits* and *Seminars*, in his article on "The Family Complexes" (1938), and in "Some Reflections on the Ego" (1951/1953).[3]

Lacan bases his mirror-stage theory on empirical data from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as on his own clinical experience, according to which infants between the ages of six and eighteen months learn to recognize themselves in a mirror (Johnston 2013:9). During this period, according to Lacan, a human child is still found in a biologically premature condition of helplessness[4] and is sunk in motor incapacity, turbulent

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The Imaginary includes such psychological phenomena as transference, fantasy, and the ego. The Symbolic register refers to inter-subjective structures formed by language and includes social and cultural "orders" such as customs, institutions, laws, norms, practices, rituals, rules, traditions, etc. The Symbolic is a configuration of signifiers, among which the subject occupies a certain place. Finally, the register of the Real stands for the reality evading a proper grasping in terms of the Imaginary or the Symbolic. The Real is an intrinsically elusive noumenal realm, conditioning the phenomenal experience but not accessible to the direct experiences of first-person awareness. In different periods, Lacan speaks of the Real in respect to Otherness, things in themselves, contingent traumatic events, unbearable bodily intensities, anxiety, and death. Sometimes, Lacan characterizes the Real as an absolute fullness, devoid of the negativities of absences, antagonisms, gaps, lacks, splits, etc. The cracks and divisions are introduced into the Real by the Symbolic through language (Johnston 2017). I will not pursue here the Advaita connotations of *brahman* undergoing illusory transformation into "names and forms." Although such connotations are obvious, Lacan's thought is too complex and nuanced to make straightforward parallels, as will become clear from the following discussion of his mirror models. See Conolly's comparative study of *brahman* and the subject in Lacanian and continental philosophy (2013). At the same time, I will try to show that mirror-like interplay between ontologically distinct registers in Lacan's thought is comparable with Indian mirror models in a philosophically interesting sense.

[3] Already at this point, I would like to mention that the idea of the mirror-stage was introduced for the first time not by Lacan, but by Henri Wallon, who has presented it in his article "Comment se développe chez l'enfant, la notion du corps propre," published in 1931. Wallon has rendered it as the "mirror test" (*épreuve du miroir*) (Roudinesco 2003:29; Nobus 2017:105, 128, n. 24). I will discuss Lacan's theory in the context of Wallon's theory in the last section of this chapter.

[4] The idea that humans are born prematurely and thus need the assistance of others for a relatively long period of their lives has been already formulated by Freud (Johnston 2013:9) and reiterated

movements, and fragmentation of his bodily organs and functions (Lacan 2006:76). The reflection of the infant's body provides a unified image to the initially fragmented mental-physical complex. This reflected image becomes the basis for the imaginary object of identity for the consciousness—the ego, the I. In this reflected unity, the infant anticipates a completeness and mastery which he, or she, does not possess yet, thus forming a notion of the Ideal-I, the ideal form of oneself "that will only asymptotically approach the subject's becoming" (Lacan 2006:76).[5] Being the image of self-unity and self-identity, the ego also becomes the source of alienation for the subject from itself in that the object of one's identity is always found outside oneself and is never achievable in its ideality (Lacan 2006:148). Lacan emphasizes that the ego is an object rather than a subject, a position he passionately defends against Anglo-American ego psychology aiming at strengthening the patient's ego as presumably autonomous and conflict-free agency of subjectivity (Johnston 2013:9). Not only is it that the ego is an object, but it is also an *illusory* object of identity for the subject—something in which the subject misrecognizes[6] him- or herself (Lacan 2006:80).

In his long paper from 1938 reprinted in 1985 under the title of "Family Complexes,"[7] Lacan posits the mirror stage in the context of the ontogenetic history of a child's development and maturation. As mentioned earlier, an infant is born prematurely, and prolonged prematurational helplessness requires external social intervention for successful physical and mental development.[8] On the biological material level, birth is a violent tearing of the organic unity between the mother and the fetus, after which the newborn infant remains utterly powerless and dependent on the nutrition and care of

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on the neuro-anatomical basis in Lodewijk Bolk's "foetalization theory" during the 1920s (Nobus 2017:107–108).

[5] Freud presents his distinction between I-ideal (ego ideal) and the Ideal-I (or the ideal ego) in his "On Narcissism" from 1914. On Lacan's reading, the former is the product of identification with the father and constitutes the symbolic introjection of an ideal, an internalized plan of the law, the guide governing the subject's position in the symbolic order (Evans 1996:25–53), and the latter is the ego if and when it succeeds at embodying its ideals.

[6] The French word *méconnaissance* in the context of Lacan's mirror stage denotes the false recognition of subject's identity with the reflection of his or her body. The actual physical disintegrated reality of the subject does not correspond to the unified external image with which the subject wishes to associate herself, and into which other people's wishes and desires are projected.

[7] The only unofficial English translation of this text by Cormac Gallagher is titled "Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual (unpublished)." I rely on it here.

[8] In his *Project for a Scientific Psychology* from 1895, Freud attempts to describe the human infant's prematurational helplessness and its interaction with the caregiver in neurobiological terms. There he also argues that the initial helplessness of human beings is the primal source of all moral motives. See SE 1:318.

others.[9] This biological insufficiency is precisely where the factor of significant otherness in the form of the caregiver, usually the mother, is introduced into the life of the child. The initial dependence on others is the prerequisite for the later development of the child's ego, which is essentially open to the external social influences and manipulations. At this earliest stage of the infant's life, the nurturing mother compensates the biological separation at birth by satisfying the child's needs and primitive desires by "suckling, embracing and contemplating her child" (Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:20).

The infant enters the mirror stage during and after yet another traumatic experience, namely that of weaning. The mother, by withdrawing her breast, causes a crisis in her child, because "weaning leaves in the human psyche the permanent trace of the biological relationship it interrupts" (Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:16). The vital tension leads to the arising of mental intention—either acceptance of the weaning or its rejection. One's oscillation between these two rudimentary intentions prepares the ground for the emergence of "me" (the one who accepts the weaning) and the awareness of the object (that which one rejects, the lost source of satisfaction). The weaning complex is also responsible for the arising of the desire for death, which for Freud was a biological drive,[10] whereas for Lacan, it is a wish to escape from one's helpless condition and to return to the mother's womb (Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:21–22).

The mirror stage comes as a solution to the weaning complex in that the previous stage characterized by painful sense of disunity, separation, fragmentation, and powerlessness is replaced by a promise of restoration of the lost unity (Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*:31). While the subject has never experienced unity prior to its anticipation during the mirror-stage, it has already experienced *the loss* of unity at birth due to the violent separation from the mother's body. During the mirror-stage, the relatively undeveloped mental intentions of rejection and acceptance develop into the growing awareness of oneself and the others.

The mirror stage is the basis for the whole psychological mechanism of the ego through all its stages. It takes place during the period of formation of

[9] Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*, pp.19–20. Interestingly, Otto Rank, in *The Trauma of Birth* from 1924, argues that birth itself is the primordial *Ur*-trauma. Freud critiques Rank's book in his own 1926 *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*.

[10] Exactly what the later Freud's *Todestrieb* amounts to and whether it is put forward by him as something strictly biological remain matters of still-unresolved controversy.

the complex of intrusion, characterized by the growing competition with the siblings and children of the same or close age (Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*: pp. 23–35). Between the ages of six months and two and a half years, in which the "specular I" is transformed into the "social I," the subject identifies itself not only with the image of one's own body, but with other human bodies as well. This second-order identification of the subject not only with its own image but with other similar images, is manifested in the phenomenon of "transitivism." Transitivism indicates a common confusion of the young child with the other subjects among whom he finds himself. "A child who beats another child says that he himself was beaten; a child who sees another child fall, cries" (Lacan 2006:98, 113). At the same time, the subject's "own" body image can and does appear just as alienating as the images of others' bodies. This has a number of important implications in Lacan's theorizing about the ego and its pathologies as will be shown. It should be noted that in Lacan's earlier writings, the process of socialization seems to proceed chronologically after the mirror stage. In his later writings, however, Lacan revisits this point and stresses that subject's socialization begins, in fact, even prior to its birth, and the socio-symbolic "creation" of the subject takes place through the anticipated place of the subject in the social order (Johnston 2013(a):9).

This socialization, consisting in identification of the subject with other subjects, causes the emergence of the subject's desire for physical objects with which it associates the subjects of its identification. The subject desires objects desired by someone else—hence the phenomenon of jealousy, which "sets the stage on which the triangular relationship between the ego, the object and 'someone else' comes into being," and expressions of aggressivity (i.e., destructive, disintegrating tendencies) come about as a result (Lacan 1953:12; 2006:89–90).[11]

Even though the objects of desire are exchangeable and can become equivalent to another, one is led to see objects as "having unity, permanence, and substantiality." At the same time, the ego also appears as a kind of inert and stable entity, despite its factual instability (Lacan 2006:90). On the other hand, the triangle of the ego-object-someone-else sets a limit to the subject's identification with the other in the form of a struggle between the ego and

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[11] Lacan here is influenced, among other sources, by Alexandre Kojève's 1930s seminars on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where Kojève famously stated that "Man's desire is the desire of the Other." Lacan, along with other French intellectuals (Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, etc.), attended Kojève's lectures and remained deeply marked by them.

the other over the object. The ego as a distinct unit(y) is reflected back from the object of competition, and the subject's expression of aggression toward its opposing "someone else" should be seen as a young child's anticipation of "the conquest of his own body's functional unity, which is still incomplete at the level of volitional motricity at that point in time" (Lacan 2006:91).

The structuralization and internalization of the ego-object-someone-else results in the formation of the imaginary alter ego structurally accompanying any and every ego. The unified *Gestalt* of one's "own" body image, as both similar to that of others' body images, as well as representing an impossible-to-achieve ideal, can itself become the object of aggression, destructiveness, hatred, etc. Alienation and misrecognition can and do arouse a spectrum of negative affects. Relatedly, all of this furnishes Lacan with means for explaining a range of psychopathological phenomena involving neurotic self-sabotaging, moral and/or sexual masochism, self-destructive behaviors, etc.

This dialectical divestment of the ego from its own otherness leads to its stagnation, to an attempt to build "military fortifications" around whatever images have been already internalized in one's self-identity, thus leaving other potential sources of identification, including the unconscious contents of one's own subjectivity outside of the ego's aggressively defended boundaries. Alternatively, certain hysterical symptoms may lead to aggressive disintegration in the individual (Lacan 2006:78). The defensive strategies of the ego, instead of strengthening the subject's capacity to cope with the reality (as claimed by ego psychologists), inevitably lead to neuroses, caused by the ego's denial (*Verneinung*) of subjective contents not included in ego's self-identity (Lacan 1953:11, 16).

The potential for madness is found in any one of us in the form of identifying myself with something, or someone, who is not myself—a misidentification characteristic of the mirror stage. At the same time, the mirror stage is the basis for the "normal" development of the ego. Not only pathological cases involve the ego's misidentification, denial, etc., but any of the "normal," that is, mildly neurotic, stages of development of family complexes, which themselves constitute the basis for the normal adult social and sexual life. Here, one of Lacan's critical targets is Anna Freud as the grandmother of ego psychology. Whereas her 1933 book's title speaks of *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense*, Lacan proposes instead that *the ego is the mechanisms of defense*. In other words, there is not a non-pathological ego separate from the ensemble of pathological defense mechanisms; rather, the ego is nothing other than, in its very essence, neurotic defensiveness.

Jealousy among siblings, "the archetype of all social feelings," corresponds to the triangle of "subject-object-someone-else." Only through the "alienating identity" with the subject's rival image, and identification with the object of other's desire, the child will be able to recognize the other as the other and oneself as oneself (Chiesa 2007:29).

Finally, the Oedipus complex, which takes place between the ages of three and five, is based on the successful resolution of previous stages and contains all the components of the further period of maturation and the adult psychic life. The love for the parent of the opposite sex and the rivalry with the parent of the same sex both constitute dialectical movement from the previous stages and involve the same mirror-stage components of alienation identity. I will not enter the detailed discussion of this important stage, as it would be beyond the scope of the present study of the mirror stage. It should be noticed, however, that the subject resolves the Oedipus complex by its alienating identification with the image of the paternal figure (which is not necessarily a male biological father) from which the ego ideal and the superego are derived, as well as sexual suppression and sublimation (Lacan, *Family Complexes in the Formation of the Individual*: pp. 35–56).

Lacan's development of the ego follows rather closely Hegel's dialectic of lordship and bondage described in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[12] Hegel similarly traces the development of self-consciousness to it facing another self-consciousness, triggering the process of self-recognition from and a struggle with the other (Lacan 2006:98; Hegel 1977:111–119). In general, early Lacan writings on the ego of the mirror stage follow Hegel's dialectical principle consistently. Each of the developmental stages involves a contradiction between unifying and alienating aspects of the ego, which are sublated through the higher stages, but never entirely disappear (Chiesa 2007:29–30).

The role, or rather the ability, of psychoanalysis, as Lacan enigmatically puts it, is to "accompany the patient to the ecstatic limit of the '*Thou art that*,' where the cipher of his mortal destiny is revealed to him" (Lacan 2006:81). He rephrases his quotation from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* fourteen years later in his *Seminar X*: "*Tat tvam asi*, the *that which thou dost recognize in the other is thyself*" (Lacan 2014:223). In other words, it is in the power of the analyst to accompany his patient to the realization of the inescapable relation of the subject to the other. The centrality of the Upaniṣadic statement in Lacan's *oeuvre*, directly related to his theory of the mirror stage, is an

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[12] This is due in large part to Kojève's influence that I have mentioned above.

important link to Indian mirror models of Advaita, where it functions as the verbal expression of a mirror-like relationship between consciousness and *ahaṃkāra*. Surprisingly, the undeniable inspiration of Vedānta on Lacan's choice of "Thou art that" as a formula summarizing the analysand's ultimate and liberating intuition has passed under the radar of Lacanian scholars. Yet Lacan finds the Upaniṣadic statement pregnant with associative meanings summarizing the human nature encoded in these three words. Throughout his writings he returns to the statement in different variations and approaches it from different angles.

The illusory nature of the ego as an autonomous independent thinking and voluntarily acting entity is exposed as a mere mechanism of identifications always external to the subject. Although eliminating the function of the ego is not a possibility in psychoanalysis, understanding its nature seems to be "ecstatic." This ecstasy, we must say, has nothing to do with the achievement of the subject's lost or imagined harmonious unity with oneself or even with the other, a kind of ultimate self-realization, as the conflicting nature of the ego would forever prevent the occurrence of both. As Lacan notes in his article from 1951, "the libidinal tension that shackles the subject to the constant pursuit of an illusory unity which is always luring him away from himself, is surely related to that agony of dereliction which is Man's particular and tragic destiny" (Lacan 1953:16). The "Thou art that!" is a formula revealing to the analysand "the cipher of his mortal destiny," in that he is confronted with one's own mortality, the inevitability of death. While the infant in its initial helplessness has been saved by the Other, the end of analysis signifies the realization of our essential helplessness and loneliness in the face of death, where there is no Other who can save us (Lacan 1992:303–304; Johnston 2009:153). As Johnston points out, in pronouncing "Thou art that!" ("*Tu es cela*") Lacan plays with a similarity between "*Tu es*" and "*tuer,*" between "Thou art that!" and "Kill that!":

> The termination of the analytic process, according to Lacan, ought to fuse the "*Tu es*" and the "*Tuer*" through bringing about a momentary encounter with the anlysand's inescapable, "ownmost" (to resort to a Heideggerian term appropriate in a context in which Lacan is alluding to the concept of "being toward death" as found in *Being and Time*). (Johnston 2009:153)

Playing with this homophony, Lacan indicates, among other things, that getting the subject to step back from the ego in identifying the latter for what

it is ("Thou art that!") simultaneously involves negation ("Kill that!") of the ego's power of enthralling and fascinating the subject formerly identifying with it.

The liberating and ecstatic effect of "Thou art that!" seems to be akin to catharsis, which spectators of a Greek drama may experience at the end of a spectacle. The one who grieves over Oedipus's horrible fulfillment of the prophecy he has been trying to avoid, also rejoices over solving the riddle of the Sphynx. In *Seminar VII*, Lacan compares between catharsis, which is the telos of the Greek tragedy, and the "purification of desire" experienced during psychoanalysis:

> To limit ourselves to something that can be said right off, that everyone has known for a long time now, and that is one of the most modest features of our practice, let us say that analysis progresses by means of a return to the meaning of an action. That alone justifies the fact that we are interested in the moral dimension. Freud's hypothesis relative to the unconscious presupposes that, whether it be healthy or sick, normal or morbid, human action has a hidden meaning that one can have access to. In such a context the notion of a catharsis that is a purification, a decantation or isolation of levels, is immediately conceivable. (Lacan 1992:312)

The ecstatic limit of the "*Thou art that*" is reached when the "deep meaning has been liberated" (Lacan 1992:312) from the frustrating cycle of pain-inflicting actions, the meaning of which the analysand has not understood until now. In the process of psychoanalysis, one's desire is crystalized in the sense that it looses its attachment to particular objects of desire, with which the subject might have been obsessed all of his or her life. Many possibilities are open for the one who is ready to direct one's desire toward new horizons, and one stops desiring the impossible (Lacan 1992:300, 323). This is why Lacan optimistically states that from this point the real journey begins.[13]

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[13] JanMohamed explores the racialized aspects of the mirror or "specular" relations between the African American subjects of Jim Crow oppression and their oppressing Others in the literary works of Richard Wright (JanMohmed 2012). Building on Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, JanMohamed identifies the internalization of oppressive relations by Wright's protagonists with the objectifying gaze of the Other. The liberation from this internalized oppression is possible when the subject distances himself "from the context that formed him so that he could have a better perspective on his own identity and formation. Wright's entire literary career, it would seem, consists of a specular examination of his own formation: the focus of the project to know and understand what the South had done to him" (93).

While in his early writings Lacan identifies the stage of socialization as a successor of the specular mirror stage, in his later writings the subject is socialized even prior to his birth, when the future child is already integrated into the symbolic structure of the social order. In his revisions of the mirror stage, Lacan adds a parental figure pointing to the infant's reflection and saying "*That's you there*" (Johnston 2013:9).[14] By these gesture and utterance the grounds for an infant's integration into the symbolic structure of social relations have been prepared, and the misrecognition of the subject with the reflection of its "own" body is made possible. On the other hand, one's cathartic realization in the form of the "*Thou art that*" is contrasted with the parental "*That's you there*" in that it reveals rather than conceals the meaningless syntactic relation in which the "I" is one of the signifiers, having no clearly distinct reference in the subject.

In his 1949 essay, Lacan uses the word "me" (*moi*) as identical with the ego. During this period, he uses the words "I" (*Je*) and "me" (*moi*) interchangeably as translations of Freud's *Ich* (Evans 2006:51). In his *Seminar II*, however, Lacan utilizes the word "*Je*" in order to explain that the I is distinct from the ego. In this context, the word "*moi*" as referring to the ego must mean "me" rather than "I." In any case, in *Seminar II*, the corresponding formula to "*Thou art that*" appears to be Rimbaud's "*I is an other*" (*Je est un autre*) (Lacan 1991b:7). Here the "I" refers to the subject—specifically the unconscious subject—which is not the ego. In fact, the I is everything the ego is not—it is the unconscious content or unconscious mental activity denied by or unknown to the conscious ego. Lacan refers to this distinction of the I from the ego as Freud's Copernican revolution in which the ego is decentered in relation to the individual (Lacan 1991b:9). Of course, a similar "Copernican revolution" has already taken place in Yoga and Advaita (and to some extent in Sāṃkhya), where the corresponding senses of *asmitā* or *ahaṃkāra* were considered as misplaced representations of the real subject of experience. Lacan explicitly identifies the subject with the unconscious and distinguishes it from the ego. It is the unconscious that "knows without knowing" and "thinks without thinking," and is the real knowing and thinking agency, that is, the subject. Understood in this sense, "*Thou art that*" means that I am not the ego; I am that which is not the ego; the real I is external to one's self-identity. As Lacan sometimes puts this, paraphrasing Descartes: "I think where I am not, and I am not where I think." Paradoxically, the I is impersonal

[14] See, for instance, Lacan 2006:568.

and refers to "an organized system of symbols, aiming to cover the whole of an experience, to animate it, to give it its meaning" (Lacan 1991b:40–41).[15] The unconscious subject is structured like a language and is manifested through speech (Chiesa 2007:36).

What Lacan keeps stressing is that the ego is not simply a negation of the I, not only a mistake of the I—although all of the above is true—but a particular object within the experience of the subject. It is an object that fills an "imaginary function" for the subject (Lacan 1991b:44). We tend to substitute the ego with the subject referred to by the "Thou" of "Thou art that," and this substitution is the origin of the confusion between the two. The subject and the ego cannot, however, appear in the same equation at all. The *Je* and the *moi* cannot stand in any relation of identity to each other even formulated as "Thou are not that," because the sentence still implies that the subject of the sentence stands in a relation to its object, even if this is a relation of a negation. As Lacan puts it,

> there's no doubt that the real *I* is not the ego. But that isn't enough, for one can always fall into thinking that the ego is only a mistake of the *I*, a partial point of view, the mere becoming aware of which would be sufficient to broaden the perspective, sufficient for the reality which has to be reached in the analytic experience to reveal itself. (Lacan 1991b:44)

Lacan attempts to avoid any identification between the ego and the subject, even if it is a false identification. Lacan warns here against the attempts of ego psychology to restore the ego its central place and its assumption that through the ego analysis it is possible to reveal an "authentic self." In fact, the subject and the ego belong to distinct realms. The ego is an image having its identity with other images. The subject belongs to the symbolic order and acquires its identity within the "trans-subjective" symbolic realm of language. At the mirror stage, there is indeed an interplay between the fragmented, unconscious subject and its unified image, that is, the ego. It is true that this interplay leaves its effect on the development of both the subject and the ego. Nevertheless, this is not the effect of the identity between the two, but of the essential confusion, misidentification of the two, and in that Lacan agrees with Indian ego theorists. In other words, it is one thing to

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[15] Likewise, in German idealism and some of its offshoots (with which Lacan is familiar already by the 1930s), the distinction between transcendental and empirical subjects involves the anonymous impersonality of the "I" qua transcendental subject.

identify or even misidentify one subject with another subject, or one object with another object. It is an entirely different thing to misidentify the subject with the object—the two do not have any real basis for comparison.

4.1.2 The Model of Two Mirrors

In Lacan's earlier writings, such as his articles from 1938, 1949, and 1951, the mirror stage is a concrete developmental stage in early childhood, triggered by the infant's encounter with the mirror. During this stage, the real mirror in which the subject identifies the reflection of his or her body is further substituted by human "mirrors," the significant others whose accompanying gaze and presence constantly reflect their perceptions of the subject. The introduction of social relations into the subject's perception of him or herself is due to the relational structures of the immediate social environment of the infant, namely the family, upon which one is condemned to depend for many years, thanks to the biological fact of prolonged prematurational helplessness. The imagos[16] of the mother, the father, the siblings, etc., are internalized into the subject, along with the "complexes" around which these imagos are organized. The formation of the ego, thus, is caused by an interplay between external reflections of the subject in the form of the familial imagos and the internal reflection or internalization of these imagos by the subject. In this process, the real reflection in the mirror is transformed into a mental reflection whose role is to connect the outside with the inside, the outer world with the inner world, the social with the organic, the other with the subject. The ego is "the knot" at the "intersection of nature and culture," "the knot of imaginary servitude" (Lacan 2006:80) whose very existence is grounded on the shaky grounds of a mixed biological and social origin.[17] Lacan persistently stresses the irreducibility of the psychic life to biological-neurological processes, contrary to certain reductionist theories.[18] The power of the

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[16] The term "imago" was introduced in psychoanalytic theory by Jung in 1911. Whereas the Latin word "imago" means "image," in psychoanalysis it refers to images of other people (such as paternal, maternal, and fraternal imagos), actualizing universal prototypes (of fatherhood, maternity, etc. respectively), and affecting the ways the subject relates to other people. The concept of "imago" occupies a central place in Lacan's pre-1950 writings, where it is closely related to the term "complex." Thus, Lacan links the weaning complex to the imago of the maternal breast, and the Oedipus complex to the imago of the father. After 1950, Lacan stops using the term "imago" almost completely (Evans 1996:85–86).

[17] As the reader might remember, the idea that the "ego" (or *ahaṃkāra*) is the knot mediating between various ontological realms also appears in Padmapāda's *Pañcapādika*.

[18] E.g., see Lacan's "Presentation on Psychical Causality" from 1946 (Lacan 2006:123–160).

society becomes predominant due to the biological insufficiency for the survival of the human child for a prolonged period. Natural dehiscence, complemented by social mediation, gives rise to the ego, in order to bridge the gap between the natural and the social, evident in the early months of human life characterized by fragmentation of being.

The mirror stage remains a central concept in Lacan's thought throughout his entire career. As Lacan testifies in 1968, "everyone knows that I entered psychoanalysis with the little brush that was called the 'mirror stage' . . . I turned the 'mirror stage' into a coat rack" (*Seminar XV*, cited in Roudinesco 2003:27). It seems, however, that from the mid-1950s the mirror stage becomes more and more symbolized and formalized. Moreover, Lacan abandons the real mirror as the cause of the child's self-recognition, and gives predominance to the symbolical order, through which the child learns to recognize himself or herself. As Nobus points out, blind children may develop self-image, even if they have never seen any reflections of their own body, as long as "the symbolic is there to replace and control" their eyes (2017:120).

An example of Lacan's recasting of the mirror stage in later years can be seen in his models of one and two mirrors and an inverted bouquet discussed in his *Seminar I* from 1954 (Lacan 1991a:76–80, 123–126, 139–142, 143–150, 164–175), in "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation" from 1960, included in his *Écrits* (Lacan 2006:563–572), in *Seminar X* from 1962–1963, and elsewhere.

Lacan adopts an optical model of a spherical mirror and an inverted bouquet (Figure 4.1) from the French physicist Henri Bouasse (1866–1953). In Bouasse's experiment, conducted primarily for recreational purposes, an empty vase is posited in front of a concave mirror. The vase stands on the top of a box, which is open toward the mirror and in which posited an inverted bouquet. If the viewer's eyes are placed in a certain position and in a certain distance from the mirror, he or she can see the reflections of the vase and the flowers in such a way that the inverted bouquet appears upright and within the vase.

In *Seminar I*, Lacan roughly identifies the box with one's physical body, the bouquet with drives and desires, the concave mirror with the cortex, and the eye with the subject (Lacan 1991a:80). In the context of his following discussion of a clinical case reported by Melanie Klein, the model describes the interplay between the imaginary and the real in the development of the ego and the subject's socialization. The illusory synthesis between the real flowers and the reflected image of the vase stands for the incessant introjection of the
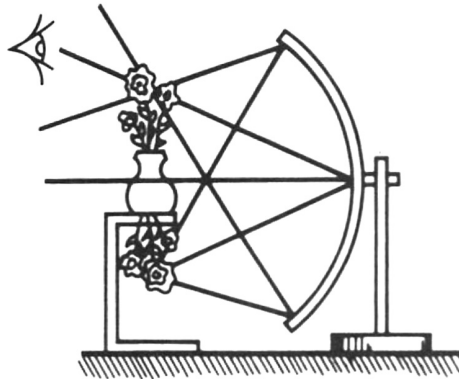
The experiment of the inverted bouquet

Figure 4.1 Bouasse's experiment with the inverted bouquet.
Reprinted with permission from Lacan 1988:78.

real images into one's "inside" (into the "intra-organic mirror" of the cortex), as well as into one's projection of one's drives and desires onto the external reality. The whole process is imagined taking place in respect to one's body (inside or outside of it), while the position of the subject for whom the interaction between the imaginary and the real becomes meaningful is established on the basis of the symbolic order. It should be emphasized that the interplay of projections and introjections, of the interaction between the imaginary and the real is only possible through the mediation of language, responsible for signification and representation of the real, for substitutions among the images, and for other meaningful relations with objects and people (Lacan 1991a:77–88).

Lacan adds to this schema of a concave mirror another plane mirror posited behind the box with the flowers and the vase (Figure 4.2). This time, it is the bouquet that is standing upright on the box, and the vase that is inverted inside the box. The viewer's eyes are looking not directly into the concave mirror, but into the plane mirror. Thus, the viewer, from his position, sees the image of the flowers within the vase as a reflection of the reflected image in the concave mirror.

In this model of two mirrors, the eye, which represents the subject (but is not the subject, as Lacan repeatedly points out) can see in the plain mirror not only the reflection of the flowers in the vase but also the reflection of one's own body. In this schema of two mirrors, in which both the subject

Schema with two mirrors
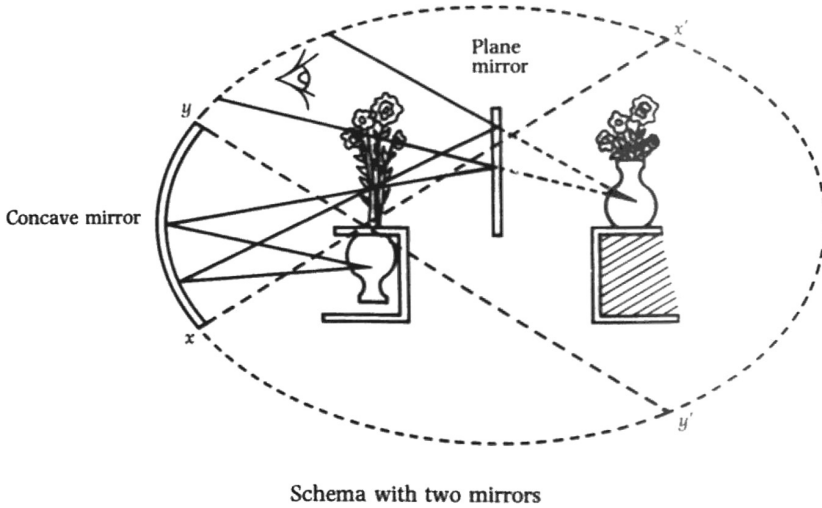
Figure 4.2 Schema with two mirrors in *Seminar I*.
Reprinted with permission from Lacan 1988:124.

and the object are reflected, Lacan traces the emergence of the initial and secondary narcissisms of the mirror stage, during which the child develops first an imaginary relation with the image of one's own body and later—with other people (Lacan 1991a:125). The model explains the process of creation of the ideal ego, which becomes the source of imaginary projection, of the illusion of self-unity, independence, and autonomy.

The plain mirror rotates and allows the subject to change his or her perception of the vase and the flowers, without changing the subject's physical position. This mirror symbolizes the discourse of the Other,[19] through which the subject's relations to reality and others are constituted. Here Lacan makes use of the model in order to describe the psychoanalytical treatment, in the course of which, the subject alters its perspective on its relations with its own self-image, with the objects of desire, and with the Other. In the context of the psychoanalytical treatment, the intersubjective interaction between the analyst and the analysand leads the latter to adopt the position from which

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[19] In 1955, Lacan makes a distinction between "the other" and "the Other," a distinction that remains central throughout his work. The other is not really other, but a projection of the ego and is entirely inscribed into the Imaginary order. The Other is another subject in its radical alterity and uniqueness, which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be an object of identification (Evans 1996:136).

the nature of the ego as constructed and constructing mechanism of illusion and misrecognition is revealed. It should be noted that this "turning around" of the analysand is not dissimilar to the role Socrates has assigned to a philosopher in his cave parable to turn the prisoners of illusions to the light of truth. At the same time, let us pay attention to the passive role of the analyst. The turning around takes place, not due to the analyst's active efforts to change the analysand's perspective, but through the dynamics of the discourse, an intersubjective process that involves depersonalization, or, as Lacanians later come to describe it, "subjective destitution," through which the analysand's rigid ego defenses are loosened (Lacan 2006:568).

While the model invokes the formation of the ego by the reflected image of the body during the mirror stage, Lacan emphasizes that his model of two mirrors is merely a metaphor conveniently illustrating several aspects of the ego ideal and the ideal ego, the interaction between the real, the imaginary and the symbolic registers, as well as the dynamics of the psychoanalytical treatment.

Of a significance for the present study is the new aspect of the ego illuminated through the metaphor of the mirror reflection. In Lacan's early treatment of the mirror stage, reflection has played the role of the illusory synthesis between biological and social planes manifested through the ego, a paradoxical entity created at the stitches between the two. The ego emerges in the attempt to heal the broken fragmentary reality, but the very efforts to bring unity and independence reproduce its essential brokenness. In the model of the two mirrors and the bouquet, reflection stands for the synthesis between the imaginary and the real by means of the symbolic. After hesitated association between the eye in the model and the subject, Lacan finally identifies the eye with the ego. The ego becomes associated with a certain position in the syntactic field of social signifiers, from which relations between the imaginary and the real are imagined, internalized, and projected. Lacan names this kind of relations "mirror relations." These are not real relations, describing relative positions of real objects, their real interaction—causal, correlative, or functional, but rather imaginary—they connect real objects with the imagined; internalize the first and project the latter.[20] These

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[20] Lacan's discussion of "mirror relations" in the context of his optical model invokes Marx's metaphor of camera obscura, an optical mechanism turning the real image into an inverted one. "In all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a *camera obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life process" (Marx 2000:146). In the process of production of ideas, real social relations between individuals and their real relations to productive forces are transformed into

relations, however, are not a free two-way flow of images—outside and inside; they are constantly mediated, interrupted, misrecognized, and distorted through the symbolic order, that is, through discourse. As Lacan points out, it is enough that the position of the eye in relation to the two mirrors slightly changes, and the subject will see an unclear image. "Let's say that this represents the uneasy accommodation of the imaginary in man,"—Lacan sums up (1991a:140). This statement somewhat weakens the Gestalt-like power of the imago over the subject in Lacan's earlier versions of the mirror stage. The paradox of the mirror stage is that while the child anticipates his mastery over his body, it is the imago of his body that has a mastery over him, fascinates and captivates him. The power of the imago of the body is preserved in the imagos of the others, which forcefully penetrate the subject and establish their rule through the internalized structuration of the superego and the ego ideal.

By introducing the prevalent agency of the symbolic order in guiding the interaction between the real and virtual images, Lacan compromises the overwhelming power of the imago. Thus, in *Seminar I* he raises questions as to how our internalization of the imago of the father takes place at the end of the Oedipus complex. He refers to certain metaphorical mythical renderings of this process, involving "devouring of one's father," as in a communion, when the Christ is eaten, and internalized by the believer (Lacan 1991a:169). Lacan points to the inadequacy of such metaphors, but perhaps he also becomes aware of certain weaknesses of his own metaphor of reflection, in which the unrestrained images take over the empty soul of the subject. Instead of rejecting the metaphor altogether, he revises it by introducing a complex optical construction of two mirrors, in which the images are necessarily mediated by the symbolic structure.[21]

The change in Lacan's attitude to the power of the imago seems to be the direct result of his encounter with de Saussure and structuralism at the end of the 1940s. In the aftermath of this encounter, Lacan sees fit to recast the imago not as purely imagistic/Imaginary, but now as a hybrid of the

mystified illusory phantoms, which nevertheless gain primary access to human imagination at the expense of reality.

[21] During the 1960s, Lacan begins distancing himself from his model of the two mirrors. He argues that in *Seminar* I, the model was needed in order to clear away the Imaginary, which was overvalued in psychoanalysis, but is no longer adequate in representing his notion of the object *a*, i.e., the object of desire that we seek in the other. Vanheule discusses the reasons behind Lacan's rejection of his own model of two mirrors in 2011:1–9.

imagistic/Imaginary and the linguistic/Symbolic. The imagistic nucleus of the ego comes to be viewed by him as suffused with and marked by signifiers (specifically, by those signifiers emitted by parental Others participating in the moment of [mis]recognition in front of the mirror).

4.1.3 Second Reflection: Consciousness

In the previous discussion of Lacan's double mirror model, I have touched upon reflection as the model of introjection and projection of images. In this section I will focus on Lacan's second reflection of the images in the "intra-organic" mirror, later associated by Lacan with the phenomenon of consciousness. I have already suggested, in the context of Vijñānabhikṣu's mutual reflection theory, that there is no reason to assume that the subject should misidentify himself with his reflection, unless he also reflects back what he perceives in the mirror. Lacan describes this constant projection and introjection of the subject and the images assumed by the ego as "a play of mirrors" (Lacan 1991a:179).

Already in his classical work on the mirror stage from 1949, Lacan postulates this second "mirror" and locates it in the cerebral cortex, which he regards as what "psycho-surgical operations will lead us to regard as the intra-organic mirror" (Lacan 2006:78). Curiously enough, the existence of Lacan's "intra-organic mirror" in this part of the brain has been supported almost fifty years later by the discovery of the "mirror neurons" responsible for the subject's imitation of other people's emotions and actions (Johnston 2012:32).

In *Seminar II*, Lacan explicitly connects the subjective mirror to the (epi) phenomenon of consciousness. He provides his "materialist definition" for consciousness, which is said to occur each time "there's a surface such that it can produce what is called *an image*" (Lacan 1991b:49). Such a surface can be found in mirrors, lakes, and in a specific area of the human brain called the "area striata" of the occipital lobe. This area, responsible for the reception of visual images, functions exactly like a mirror, in the sense that an image is reflected at some point of the surface and strikes the corresponding same point in space (Lacan 1991b:49). The ego is merely an object, an image reflected in consciousness. The ego and the consciousness are always correlated; they always appear together. Nevertheless, they are not the same thing—the ego is external to consciousness.

Lacan takes a stand against what he calls the "religious conception of consciousness," which coincides with the modern atheistic anthropocentrism. According to this idealist view, to which Lacan opposes his "material definition," consciousness is a privileged vantage point, a pinnacle of creation, teleological cause of all material processes (Lacan 1991b:47–48). In fact, argues Lacan, "consciousness is linked to something entirely contingent, just as contingent as the surface of a lake in an uninhabited world—the existence of our eyes or of our ears" (Lacan 1991b:48). In other words, the ability to reflect external reality by consciousness is no different from the ability to reflect in any other reflectory physical objects. Consciousness is a contingent material phenomenon, a byproduct of the activity of blind nature. Conscious subject is a marginal part of subjectivity linked to the mechanical ability of the sense organs to reproduce images. Thus, Lacan often takes the eye, and not the cortex, to be the mirror of subjectivity, as the receptive surface posited in a particular location in relation to the rest of the world, thus organizing the world into space in accordance to its position (Lacan 2014:223; 1991a:80). At the same time, in "The Freudian Thing," Lacan points to the Freudian distinction between the "perception-consciousness system" and consciousness proper to argue that not all "reflected" (i.e., perceived) images are consciously perceived. Some contents of perception consciousness bypass the awareness of consciousness proper and affect the network of unconscious mental contents. Thus, the unconscious interferes even with apparently conscious domain of perception (Johnston 2017:117–118).

As we have seen in his model of the two mirrors and the bouquet, at least on a metaphorical level, Lacan regards the eye as symbolic of the subject (Lacan 1991a:80). The eye is not the subject because it has nothing to do with the unconscious. At the same time, it signifies the subject's position in respect to the objective reality, including the ego. It is a specular position at the level of the imaginary, but nevertheless it relates to the real place of the unconscious subject in the symbolic world, that is, in the world of speech (Lacan 1991a:80). The eye is the visible signifier of the subject in the objective world as the "seer," without reducing the subject to its objective imagery. When the eye mirror meets another mirror (a physical mirror or the eyes of other human beings), the signifier of the subject multiplies into infinity of reflected self-images born from the interplay between one's perception of others and the others' perceptions of oneself. As Lacan puts it, "it has no need of two mirrors standing opposite one another for the infinite reflections of a

mirror palace to be created. As soon as there is an eye and a mirror, the infinite recursion of inter-reflected images is produced" (Lacan 2014:224).

4.1.4 Mirror Stage in Perspective: Wallon and Lacan

In this section, I would like to briefly compare Lacan's theory of the mirror stage with Henri Wallon's interpretation of this stage. On the one hand, I will put Lacan's theory in perspective by reframing the context and the function of the mirror stage as a developmental stage and a metaphor. On the other hand, by changing the perspective, I will posit Lacan's theory of reflection, as I have reconstructed it throughout this chapter, as *only one* version of psychological theory of reflection, instead of treating it as *the only one*.[22]

As I have mentioned earlier, Lacan owes the concept of the mirror stage to Henri Wallon (1879–1962), although throughout his career Lacan "forgets" to acknowledge this fact and insists that it was he who introduced the term (Roudinesco 2003:27). In 1931, Wallon gives the name *épreuve du miroir* (mirror test) to an experiment through which the child learns to distinguish his own body from its reflected image between the age of three months and the end of the first year (Roudinesco 2003:27; Nobus 2017:106). Wallon relies upon the empirical observations made by Charles Darwin, William Preyer, and Paul Guillaume, suggesting that children usually remain indifferent toward their own reflection before the age of three months, fixate and smile to it around the age of four months, and understand that the reflected image does not lead a separate existence by the end of the first year of their lives (Nobus 2017:105–106). Wallon is interested in the development of self-awareness in respect to one's unified image of the body. He argues that the child does not recognize himself or herself at the first stage because during this period the child forms a unity with his or her own image. Recognition of oneself in a mirror must be preceded by recognition of the other, which implies a comparison of two images different in nature (Voyat 1984:43). He speculates that the child's engagement with his mirror image and the progressive mastery of it result in the child's ability to distinguish himself or herself from the rest of the world (Nobus 2017:106).

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[22] Interestingly, it was Wallon who commissioned Lacan's 1938 essay on "The Family Complexes." Moreover, various empirical researchers from the 1970s onward have revisited mirror (and video) self-recognition phenomena in young children. For other usages of reflection analogy in psychology, see, e.g., Vanheule and Verhaeghe 2009:399–402; Pines 1998:17–40.

While early Lacan, as evidenced in his "Family Complexes," shares with Wallon his interest in the mirror test as an explanation for certain developmental processes, he gradually distances himself from Wallon's perception of the mirror test by recasting it in terms of the unconscious (Roudinesco 2003:30). This is not surprising, as strictly speaking each of them works in a different conceptual framework: Wallon—primarily in the field of cognitive development (dominated by such figures as Jean Piaget); Lacan—in psychoanalysis (Freudian tradition).

Nevertheless, Lacan and Wallon share an essential commitment to irreducibility of psychical life to natural factors and seek to explain how social factors collaborate with and dominate the natural. In particular, both are interested in describing the internalization of social structures by the psychological subject, the process through which the external social dynamics turns into an individual psychical and cognitive activity. Like Lacan, Wallon utilizes the concept of reflection, not only in the context of the mirror stage, but metaphorically extends it to the description of the subject-other interrelations:

> "Man begins by being reflected in another man as in a mirror. Only when Peter develops an attitude toward Paul which is similar to the attitude he has toward himself, does Peter begin to become conscious of himself as a man." This statement of Marx's (*Capital*, Vol. 3) expresses very clearly the back-and-forth motion between self and other, and between the image perceived in the other and oneself—an interplay which not only has a moral or social character but is also an essential psychological process. (Wallon 1984a:127)

Wallon accepts Marx's comparison of human social nature to a mirror; human individuals form their self-image through treating other human beings as mirrors and perceive themselves as mirrors reflecting, internalizing, and imitating the others.

Wallon, a relatively orthodox Marxist, perhaps inherits the framing of the problem of social internalization and his method from "cultural-historical psychology," developed in the Soviet Union by Lev Vygotsky, Alexei Leontiev, and others.[23] The central factor in internalization and psychologization of the social, in this school, plays human activity and practice. The process of

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[23] On the impact of Soviet psychology on Wallon, see Wallon 1984b:256–257. It should be noticed that the later Lacan comes explicitly to self-identify as a "dialectical materialist." See Johnston 2014:84–99.

learning and development involves social interaction with others, personal imitation of the activity of others, and further repetition of this activity through one's own efforts. Language plays an important part in the process of internalization, as it serves both as a medium of social communication and as giving shape to thought.

In his study of imitation in early childhood, Wallon traces the developmental transition from practical (sensorimotor) intelligence, which serves the children's learning through interacting with objects, to intelligence that operates via representations and symbols. When the infant is still incapable of intentional acts, after the eleventh week, he or she is able to stick his or her tongue out when someone else is doing it in front of him or her. At this stage, imitation is merely an involuntary reflex.[24] Around the seven months, however, the child knows how to stick his or her tongue out without an actual model present. This development demonstrates the transition to real imitation. The child first imitates the emotional expressions of others, such as the smile of the adult. In so doing, the child establishes a communication with an adult that has an integrating effect. At about three years of age, the child begins to achieve differentiation between the object and its representation and becomes capable of intentional imitation, in which the model, instead of being imposed on the child, is chosen by him. The desire to imitate is added to the ability to imitate (Voyat 1984:38–39).

For Wallon, imitation is a necessary component of representation, which stands for the substitution of one word or object for another. Imitation takes place on the level of an action repeating the activity of the model, while the active substitution of the model by a different thing is responsible for the development of representational thinking. For instance, a child playing train with a wooden block imitates the action of the train and substitutes the train with the block (Voyat 1984:39). More recent researchers into these identificatory phenomena likewise emphasize the important role of imitation.[25]

As I have mentioned earlier, Lacan locates certain "mirroring" qualities responsible for the internalization of social reality within the cerebral cortex. Wallon, following Pavlov, also considers the cerebral cortex a place in which the reaction of the reflexes to the external stimuli is taking place, and as a result develops "higher nervous activity." The cerebral cortex, thus, is

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[24] Today we know that mirror neurons are responsible for such examples of unintentional imitation of the visible actions of another person. See Metzinger 2003:367.

[25] See Galesse and Stamenov 2002.

responsible for the interaction between the organism and the environment—not only physical but also social environment—on which we depend for our existence and which we create and shape through our own activity (Wallon 1984c:243–244). Like Lacan in his fundamental article from 1949, Wallon cautiously relates the development of an awareness to one's body image, to the cortical activity, responsible for the synchronization between the visual sphere of perception and the kinesthetic activity in the body (Wallon 1984a:130). More recently, these claims have been substantiated in terms of neuroplasticity, following the discovery that the genetic functions may change as a result of external influences, and epigenetics, studying physical changes in the brain due to experience.

Wallon accepts Lacan's characterization of early childhood as an experience of fragmentation and search for unity but criticizes some of its tragic implications. I will quote him in some length:

> There are nightmares and delusions which effectively demonstrate that this systematic combination of the parts of the body into a dynamic and harmonious unit is by no means there from the outset, and that it is always liable to break down once more. On the other hand, to speak as the psychoanalysts do of a return to the "abysses" of childhood, to look upon the child as a tortured soul in search of body wholeness, or like Lacan to evoke "dislocation, dismemberment, emasculation, cannibalism, entombment," is to invent a tragic reality to which nothing in the child's behavior actually attests. The child's researches concerning himself and the objects about him are informed by the same lively and often joyful curiosity that he brings to his perceptual and motor learning. To feel dislocated, he would have to be endowed with some kind of foreknowledge of his future bodily unity, and there is no evidence to support this idea. Where could such an intuition come from at this stage, before the indispensable nervous maturation and the experiences to which this maturation will open the door? (Wallon 1985a:123)

Lacan's theory, in fact, can address these objections. While it is true that the child has not experienced bodily unity prior to its anticipation during the mirror stage, he or she has already experienced *the loss* of unity at birth due to the violent separation from the mother's body. Although the child cannot consciously remember, this event is registered in the unconscious as the primary traumatic experience. Furthermore, the fact that existential anxieties

regarding one's unity are not manifested in the child's conscious behavior does not mean that these do not exist on the unconscious level.

It is not the purpose of the present study to take sides either with Lacan or Wallon on their interpretations of the mirror stage and their stands on the question of social internalization. The comparison between the two rather aims at clarifying their positions and underlining the variety of theories of reflection existing in the field of contemporary psychological theories.[26]

4.1.5 Lacan: Summary

I have examined Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, his model of two mirrors and a bouquet, as well as his concept of the intra-organic mirror related to the phenomenon of consciousness and located in the cerebral cortex. I have discussed the concept of reflection as explanatory of the interaction between nature and the society and constitutive of the ego, the "knot" between the two realms. In later writings, Lacan presents the ego as a different kind of a "knot" connecting between the Imaginary and the Real by means of the Symbolic.

Lacan's second reflection in the cerebral cortex explains the internalization of social structures and the symbolic order by the subject. For Lacan, the internalization is passive and is driven by the captivating power of the imagos (in early Lacan), as well as through the symbolic order (Lacan of the 1950s). Wallon challenges this notion of passive reflection and maintains that the subject internalizes social processes through active imitation of other human beings.

Lacan's implementation of the concept of reflection is an example of a well-developed theory of reflection as applied to the interaction between social and natural realms, between the real and the imaginary and to the formation of the psychical agency of the ego. Lacan's theory of reflection shares with Indian theories the following features: (1) Reflection is an explanation of interaction between entities with distinct ontological statuses; (2) Reflection is responsible for the arising of the ego—an entity of a mixed ontological ancestry whose function is the illusory identity between subjective and objective contents; (3) Reflection is an account of internalization of external contents by mental faculty; (4) Reflection describes the essential openness of the ego toward identity with the contents and properties which do not

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[26] On a survey of some of these theories, see Pines 1998:20.

originally belong to it (as in Advaita and Yoga), as well as the inseparability between the subject and the other (as in Advaita). These characteristics of the ego and the subject can be expressed by the formula "Thou art That!"

On the other hand, Lacan's account of consciousness is materialist, as opposed to Indian models, as well as ontologically continuous with the unconscious subject, contrary to Indian models of independent reality of consciousness, radically distinct from material non-conscious processes. Yet the mechanism of self-other/subject-object identities is similar: it is imaginary and based on the apparatus of misrecognition (*méconnaissance/ avidyā*) rather than on some real relations.

4.2 Thomas Metzinger's Representational Theory of Pure Consciousness

Thomas Metzinger's monumental *Being No One: The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity* constructs a comprehensive representational theory of consciousness, the phenomenal self, and the first-person perspective. The representada of his theory are various functional properties playing part in the survival of the human physical organism and realizable through physical-neurobiological processes taking place in the brainstem and hypothalamus (Metzinger 2003:305). These processes are represented as phenomenal properties in the forms of mental self-representation, as well as representations of the world. On the basis of scientifically informed accounts of neurological correlates of mental phenomena, Metzinger provides phenomenological, representationalist, informational-computational, functional, and physical-neurobiological explanations of what he calls the "phenomenal *self*-model" (PSM).

As I have already argued, mirror models of consciousness in Indian philosophy are essentially representationalist, and the pair of terms *bimba-pratibimba* corresponds to *representatum-representandum*. Thus, Metzinger's theory of the brain representing the neurobiological reality through phenomenally experienced qualia[27] can serve—with all possible reservations—as an approximate translation of the relation between the intellect and the external objects in Sāṃkhya. Let us see now how Metzinger sees the relation between the brain and consciousness.

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[27] See Metzinger's discussion of qualia in 2003:62–86.

The main idea of the book, summarized in its title, is that the self is un-real; it is an evolutionary practical model of representing a biological system such as our body and its various functions to itself. However, there is nothing like the self, existing independently and objectively. One of the metaphors used in the book to describe the representational nature of PSM, which does not involve the separate existence of a witness of mental representations, is inspired by Plato's simile of a cave. Plato's prisoner, who has never left the cave in which he is imprisoned, perceives only the shadows on the cave's wall, without being able to see their prototypes or the external world outside the cave. Each one of us is such a prisoner prevented from the external reality and only having access to the mental representations of this reality constructed and modeled by our brain. The only difference from Plato's metaphor—says Metzinger—is that in our cave, that is, in the biosystem that creates the rep-resentational world, there is no prisoner. The cave is empty. The self, who is imagined as the witness of representations, is only a representation of a cave itself. And here Metzinger looks for the Indian mirror models to support his theory of PSM, as he chooses to make a reference to the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* ascribed to no other than Śaṅkara:[28]

> The beauty of the shadow metaphor for self-consciousness consists partly in the fact that it is not only a classical but also a global metaphor—one to be found at the origin of many of mankind's great philosoph-ical traditions. To name a prominent non-Western example, Śaṃkara (who lived 1200 years later than Plato, from 788 A.D. to 820 A.D.), in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, or *Crest-Jewel of Wisdom* (Śaṃkara 1966, p. 70), argued that just as we don't confuse ourselves with the shadow cast by our own body, or with a reflection of it, or with the body as it appears in a dream or in imagination, we should not identify with what appears to be our bodily self right now. Śaṃkara said: "Just as you have no self-identification with your shadow-body, reflection-body, dream-body, or imagination body, so should you not have with the living body. The SMT [self-model theory of subjectivity—D.S.] offers a deeper understanding of why, in standard situations, the system as a whole inevitably *does* identify itself with its own neurodynamical shadow, with its inner computational reflection of itself,

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[28] Contemporary scholars express doubts regarding the authenticity of Śaṅkara's authorship of the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, although the tradition accepts it as his work (Mayeda 1992:10). Yet Metzinger's ap-peal to Śaṅkara's idea of *pratibimba* is appropriate here.

with its continuous online dream about, and internal emulation of, itself."
(Metzinger 2003:549–550)

Metzinger appeals to Śaṅkara's mirror model as similar to his own theory of
selfhood, where the biosystem at the basis of a human body represents itself
to itself and is also misled to believe that this representation—no more real
and independent than a reflection in a mirror—is taken to be a separately
existing entity.

What exactly does the self represent? Metzinger meticulously
demonstrates the constructed nature of the self, where its different aspects
correlate with the activity in different parts of the brain and fulfill different
functions. For the purposes of this study, it is unnecessary to go through all
the aspects of selfhood, such as the autobiographical (Metzinger 2003:350,
522, 583), volitional (426, 506), bodily (405, 407, 481, 484), and other self-
models. Indian theories examined in previous chapters would agree on the
constructed nature of these "selves" and would warn against identifying
them with the ultimate self. According to these theories, however, pure con-
sciousness is the entity, which may not be further deconstructed or reduced
to physical or mental processes. It is not a representation standing for some-
thing else. On the contrary—in Yoga and Advaita, it is the representandum
(*bimba*), for which *asmitā* or *ahaṃkāra* serve as representata (*pratibimba*s).
Moreover, as Prajāpati's lesson to Indra and Virocana indicates—and
Sāṃkhya and Yoga theories of reflection in consciousness make the same
point—pure consciousness is that in which representations appear; it is a
phenomenal mirror. Is there anything that corresponds to this view of con-
sciousness in Metzinger?

Metzinger denies the existence of any self, which could be posited out-
side the realm of representata as noumenally existent reality. In *Being No
One*, he is primarily interested in identifying the neural correlates and the
corresponding function of what Ned Block calls "access consciousness" and
"phenomenal consciousness." None of these terms fits for describing pure
consciousness of the Indian mirror models. "Phenomenal consciousness" is
the sense of "what it is like" to be someone or experience something. "Access
consciousness," on the other hand, refers to the availability of the contents
of cognition; to "be conscious" in the sense of being able to report, de-
scribe, reason, or use it to guide how you act or behave (Thompson 2015:7).
Metzinger suggests that the phenomenal consciousness in its minimal sense,
which includes the first-person phenomenology, refers to the presentation of

the "highest-order integrated representational structure" within "a window of presence generated by the system" (Metzinger 2003:136). He ascribes to consciousness the role of representing external reality and the bodily system from a perspective centralizing the point of reference of the body in relation to the world represented in space and in temporal presence. At the same time—and this aspect of consciousness seems to incorporate access consciousness—it functions as a global, integrative factor, interconnecting the information from different areas of the body and the brain, and representing the system as a whole. Metzinger grounds this integrative view of consciousness on Edelman and Tononi's "dynamic core hypothesis," according to which "any group of neurons can contribute directly to conscious experience only if it is part of a distributed functional cluster that, through reentrant interactions in the thalamocortical system, achieves high integration in hundreds of milliseconds" (Metzinger 2003:141).

Metzinger makes the experience of *pure consciousness*, which he calls the "minimal phenomenal experience" (MPE), the object of his recent study (2020).[29] He relies on Indian and Tibetan texts describing the direct experience of pure consciousness during advanced meditative stages, as well as on contemporary reports of proficient meditators. This state, where all intentional thoughts disappear, the awareness of the external world decreases, and all that remains is clarity of awareness itself, approximates the description of pure consciousness in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita. This state lacks "minimal phenomenal selfhood" (MPS), that is, any form of identification with the body as a whole, spatiotemporal self-location, and first-person perspective. It also lacks any other form of egoic self-consciousness, time representation, and a spatial frame of reference (2020:2). Metzinger focuses, in his study, on the phenomenological description of pure consciousness, which he characterizes by six dimensions of wakefulness, low complexity, self-luminosity, introspective availability, epistemicity, and the ability to transform its transparency[30] into opacity.[31]

The experience of pure consciousness, which is empty of intentional contents—Metzinger admits the possibility of such "contentless

[29] The very possibility of the experience of pure consciousness has been contested in the classical work *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis* (1978), edited by Stephen Katz, and defended in now no-less classical *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy* (1997), edited by Robert K.C. Forman.

[30] I.e., phenomenal state, the only properties of which are open to introspection are their intentional or content properties.

[31] I.e., phenomenal state, where introspection of the phenomenal state itself is available.

consciousness"—is not entirely simple and can be analyzed into having certain properties, each of which represents some function for the organism. Thus, the state of wakefulness represents the functional property of "tonic awareness," the subjective experience of which can indicate its degrees (2020:13, 33). Low complexity means "*minimal complexity of reportable representational content* on the level of conscious processing" (14). MPE indicates abstract "expectation" of having epistemic states and represents the "realness" experienced as epistemic confidence, the "knowledge that we know" (31, 34). In addition, MPE may stand for a maximally abstract form of bodily self-awareness or an internal model of an epistemic space (36). This abstract form is a representation, which does not distinguish between the subject and the object of experience:

> Epistemologically, therefore, wakefulness is an abstract, non-egoic form of self-knowledge. However, this knowledge appears under a specific inner mode of presentation, by using an internal representational format which does not yet involve subject/object structure, time-representation, or spatial embodiment. The ensuing phenomenology can therefore be described as selfless, timeless, and non-spatial, as a *model of an epistemic space*, a space in which knowledge states can occur. (37, n. 25)

On the neurological level of description, Metzinger quotes Oken, Salinsky, and Elas, who speak of activation states of cerebral cortex that impact the ability to process information where the activation itself contains no specific information (cited in Metzinger 2020:31). He summarizes his discussion of MPE as follows:

> MPE is aperspectival and it does not instantiate MPS [minimal phenomenal selfhood—D.S.], but it definitely has representational content and a correspondingly unique, phenomenal character *sui generis*. However, the question of whether and in what sense it can count as "fundamental," and whether it is the *only* true minimal state of consciousness, has not been answered. If the above is correct, phenomenality is a transparent, temporally thin, and global representation of subjective confidence, relative to the abstract possibility of knowledge. (38)

Metzinger, thus, posits the very phenomenality, which is the condition for the arising of intentional states, at the level of representation.

Metzinger makes it clear that "the MPE approach as sketched out here operates under naturalistic background assumptions, and it does so without having given an independent argument to support these assumptions" (2020:7). In other words, MPE is not over and above neurological processes. The above properties of MPE are phenomenal properties, representing the functional properties of the human organism, whereas the vehicle realizing these are physical properties. Whether MPE is a product of neurological activity, as Metzinger's naturalistic commitment implies, or whether pure consciousness persists in the absence of such activity, as argued in Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Advaita Vedānta can hardly be resolved empirically at this stage. On the one hand, as Evan Thompson convincingly demonstrates, neurological evidence on the total absence of phenomenal consciousness during deep sleep, is inconclusive (2015:252–261). This may suggest that it is possible that during deep sleep, consciousness does not disappear, and thus can be the kind of an eternal entity surviving the states of wakefulness, dream, deep sleep, and death. On the other hand, the evidence that near-death experiences occur during cardiac arrest, when neurological activity completely stops, is also inconclusive, as these experiences could have occurred during the brief moments before or after the EEG flatline (Thompson 2015:301–314). In other words, we also do not have any convincing evidence that consciousness may persist without the basis of the brain.[32]

At the same time, as I will show in the following section, on philosophical grounds, the famous "explanatory gap" in naturalistic explanations of phenomenal consciousness creates some opportunities for the Indian theories of pure consciousness to prove that they have a case. Mirror-models of interaction between consciousness and its perceived material basis would make this case even stronger. However, before moving on, it can be pointed out that for naturalist representationalist theory of consciousness, like that of Metzinger, the explanatory gap consists in the difficulty to locate the phenomenal occurrence. Where do representations appear? They are not in the physical texture of the brain, although the brain is undeniably responsible for their construction. Whereas Metzinger suggests that MPE is "*a model of an epistemic space, a space in which knowledge states can occur*" (36, n.25), it itself is a representational content requiring its own space. The brain projects the information about the prototypical reality in the form of a phantom, but it needs the wall

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[32] I refer the reader again to Thompson's excellent and rich discussion of empirical evidence for and against the possibility of independent existence of consciousness (2015).

for the phantom to appear. The absence of the phenomenal mirror is the gap in the representationalist explanation, where the images of the reflected reality float nowhere.

4.3 Reflection in a Mirror and the Hard Problem of Consciousness

In contemporary philosophy of mind, the most common solution to the problem of interaction between consciousness and matter has been reducing consciousness to matter, for example, to brainstates or brain functions. However, David Chalmers, Thomas Nagel, Joseph Levine, and others argue against reductionist solutions to what they regard as the "hard problem of consciousness," that is, the prima facie unsurpassable difficulty to explain the phenomenon of consciousness in natural terms.

In what follows, I will focus on metaphysical dualism of the Sāṃkhya school, shared with Yoga, and will argue that its division between consciousness on the one hand, and mind-body on the other, is an attractive solution to the hard problem of consciousness, a solution which avoids the problems of Cartesian mind-body dualism. It allows formulating a plausible account of consciousness as irreducible to naturalist terms, without giving up on the possibility of naturalist explanation of mental processes, including mental representation and intentionality, as well as partial reduction of qualia. I will further show that its model of mirror reflection describing the relation between consciousness and the mind is a viable alternative to causal interactionism, perhaps the most vulnerable aspect of Cartesian metaphysical dualism.

As scientific explanations of natural phenomena exclusively in materialist terms have been much more convincing than alternative nonmaterialist explanations, one could expect the best explanation of consciousness to be materialist as well. Assuming that consciousness is nothing over and above material processes, that is, it is a natural, rather than a supernatural kind of thing, there must be some form of reduction of consciousness to natural terms. Yet, several philosophers of mind point out the shortcomings of the reductionist project in respect to consciousness and consider the problem of consciousness as the "hard problem."

What makes the problem of consciousness a hard problem is that subjective experience associated with consciousness seems to evade the range of

objectively observable phenomena, well accountable by natural sciences. In Thomas Nagel's words, "there is something it is like to *be*" a particular conscious being" (Nagel 1974:436). An experience has a subjective character. In this sense, being conscious, or phenomenally conscious, means that mental states and processes, such as perception of colors, sounds, smell and touch, the feelings of pleasure and pain, thoughts and emotions do not merely occur, registered by neurological activity, but are phenomenally experienced. There is no doubt that experience is closely associated with physical processes in systems such as brains, and that contemporary cognitivism and brain sciences are fully competent in explaining these physical processes. What posits the hard problem for naturalist accounts of consciousness is how and why physical processes give rise to consciousness. As David Chalmers puts it, "why do not these processes take place "in the dark," without any accompanying states of experience?" (2003:103–104).

Chalmers points out that consciousness does not seem to fulfill any function in a physicalist explanation of cognitive and behavioral activity. We can imagine a system that is physically identical to a conscious being but that lacks consciousness. Such a being, a kind of a zombie, would act in precisely the same way as a normal conscious being and its brain processes will be molecule-for-molecule identical with the original. The crucial difference is that for a conscious being there is something it is like to be that being, while there is nothing it is like to be a zombie, just like there is nothing it is like to be a rock or a table (2003:105–106).

The explanatory gap between conscious experience of a certain phenomenon and its materialist explanation is found in the inability to explain in material terms what Jaegwon Kim calls a "mental residue" of phenomenal qualities. Cognitive, perceptual, and emotive processes and their contents can be explained in physicalist of functionalist terms. Their "experienceability" remains a mystery.

A number of contemporary Sāṃkhya scholars, among them Paul Schweizer, Gerald J. Larson, and Roy W. Perrett, have pointed out that Sāṃkhya mind-consciousness dualism suggests a plausible solution to the mind-body problem, a better solution than Cartesian dualism, the latter viewed as untenable by the majority of analytic philosophers. Sāṃkhya considers consciousness as irreducible to anything explainable in natural terms. However, as Paul Schweizer argued, the gap between qualia and brain states is less problematic here than in the Cartesian association of consciousness with the mind, since the representational content of conscious mental

states, as well as the functional role of qualia are held to be metaphysically independent from consciousness (Schweitzer 1993:847). Qualia, on this account, are a mixture of mental *contents* reducible to naturalist terms and of their *phenomenal character* irreducible to naturalist terms but reducible to consciousness. Since the contents of conscious experience are of the same metaphysical category as the objects they represent, and thus can causally interact, mental formation, at least in principle, can be accounted for in terms of physical interactions (847).

The problem of mental causation in contemporary non-reductionist accounts has sometimes been regarded as inherited from Cartesian view of mind. For Descartes, the minds are cognitively active (in agreement with Sāṃkhya) but also possess phenomenal properties (attributed by Sāṃkhya to consciousness). The problem of mental causation has two aspects—one is the problematic causal overdetermination of mental and physical causes, and the other is the problem of interaction between separate ontological entities.

Problematic causal overdetermination refers to the violation of what Jaegwon Kim calls the "principle of causal exclusion":

> If an event e has a sufficient cause c at t, no event at t distinct from c can be a cause of e (unless this is a genuine case of causal overdetermination). (Kim 2005:17)

Suppose that a certain person experiences a sudden pain and his finger twitches. We know that pain occurs only because a certain neural state occurs. If a particular neural state Ψ occurs, this person will experience pain, and she will not experience this pain unless Ψ occurs. Suppose that neurophysiologists have discovered a causal chain from Ψ to the finger twitching, establishing Ψ as its sufficient physical cause. If we consider this person's pain to be the mental cause of twitching her finger, we have an overdetermination of causes—the one physical (the neural event Ψ) and the other mental (one's pain). Given that twitching the finger is a physical event and has physical cause in the form of Ψ, how is a mental cause also possible? How could one and the same event have two distinct causal origins (Kim 2005:155)?

While the problem of overdetermination, or the problem of exclusion, poses a difficulty for Cartesian dualism, one can see that Sāṃkhya dualism is immune from it, as it has no problem to reduce mental causes to physical.

At the same time, consciousness in Sāṃkhya does not compete or interfere with matter in causal explanation of mental phenomena. What consciousness might contribute to the above-described example is an explanation as to why the pain is experienced, an explanation, which is not a part of a neurological account of the occurrence of pain and its causal connection with the twitching of the finger.

Another problem, related to mental causation in metaphysical dualism, is the question of how physical and nonphysical entities can interact at all. There is a long history of criticism of Descartes's interactionist dualism, and some consider the implausibility of interaction between radically different minds and bodies as the main cause of decline of Cartesianism (Kim 2005:73). Thus, according to Anthony Kenny:

> On Descartes' principles it is difficult to see how an unextended thinking substance can cause motion in an extended unthinking substance and how the extended unthinking substance can cause sensations in the unextended thinking substance. The properties of the two kinds of substance seem to place them in such diverse categories that it is impossible for them to interact. (Kenny 1968:222–223)

More recently, Kim has shown that, irrespectively of the question whether ontologically distinct entities can interact, there is an even deeper problem with Cartesian interactionist dualism. It is that causal relations are conceivable only in spatial terms, such as the chain of events between firing of a bullet and the death of Bob, located in a particular location and in a distance in respect to the firing gun. Spatial relations are invoked to answer the question of which material things are causally responsible for changes in other material things. There is no nonphysical coordinate system, which could locate nonmaterial things in respect to each other, or in respect to material things, to enable us to make sense of causal relations involving nonmaterial entities. Nor do we have any idea what such a framework might look like (Kim 2005:78–82).

Mirror-reflection model evades the problem of causal interaction between metaphysically incompatible entities of consciousness and the physical mind. Simply put, there is no real interaction between consciousness and the mind. Consciousness does not have any function to play in causal interactions, within physical or mental processes. What is there is the *appearance* of interaction in the form of conscious phenomenal experience.

Not only does the mirror-reflection model rescue metaphysical dualism as a plausible position by avoiding the problems of interactionism but also makes such a formulation of physicalism, in which the non-reducible residue of consciousness is accountable. The non-reducibility of consciousness to matter is not necessarily a threat to the coherence of naturalism, because consciousness does not exist in this world or outside of it. While consciousness in Sāṃkhya is real, it is not real in the same sense as physical entities and processes are real. Advaita Vedānta coined a term to describe the unusual ontological status of phenomenal experience—*anirvacanīya*, inexpressible or indeterminable. Phenomenal existence neither can be said to exist as an objective reality it represents, nor can it be said to be a nonexistent entity, like a hair's horn, because phenomenality appears and presents itself before our own eyes. If this neither-real-nor-unreal way of being comes to phenomenal experience from consciousness, then, perhaps, it would be more appropriate to speak about consciousness in terms of appearance, or phenomenal existence, or *anirvacanīyatva*, rather than in terms of reality or existence. Consciousness is the manifesting element, the element, which turns reality into phenomenally experienced. It adds nothing to the material world—causally, functionally, or materially. Consciousness is the bare fact of experience, acknowledged as a metaphysical possibility, rather than as a mystification.

From a physicalist standpoint, a position according to which intentional and cognitive properties are reducible to matter, but qualitative properties of consciousness are not, in Jaegwon Kim's words "isn't losing much," as cognition, agency, and even qualia similarities and differences remain within reach of scientific explanations (Kim 2005:174). On the other hand, from the perspective of Sāṃkhya, the soteriological appeal of consciousness lies in its absolute freedom from any relation to the bondages of material reality.

4.4 New Theories of Consciousness-Matter Dualism, Mirror Interactionism, and Representationalism

Before wrapping up this monograph, I would like to construct a plausible mirror model of consciousness, which takes into account the benefits of the old models and modifies them to deal with their weaknesses. While negotiating with contemporary naturalism, I believe that Sāṃkhya-Yoga consciousness-matter dualism is not only easier to swallow than Advaita

idealist non-dualism, but may actually be considered an ally, assisting naturalism in dealing with the "annoying" phenomenal residue.

There still might be problems with Sāṃkhya dualism and its mirror-reflection interaction model, the most serious among which, perhaps, is the problem of individuation of "consciousnesses" (so to speak), as well as the problem of explaining the association of particular consciousness with a particular mind. I would like to suggest modifying the original position of Sāṃkhya to deal with these difficulties, without changing the essential standpoint on substance dualism between consciousness and matter.

The problem of individuation consists in the impossibility to determine what differentiates and individuates one consciousness from another, once they are conceived independently from particular minds and bodies. Since consciousness is non-spatial or all-pervasive, how does one draw the limit between one consciousness to another? Another problem is that while it is intelligible that the illusory interaction between consciousness and the mind takes place due to complementarity in their respective properties of being able to "see" and being able to "be seen," it is not intelligible why a particular mind is identified with this consciousness rather than with another.

One solution is postulation of one consciousness, as has been done in Advaita Vedānta. The standard reasons given in Sāṃkhya for plurality of *puruṣa*s are the facts of diversity in births, deaths, and faculties. If there were only one consciousness, then by being born, a person would simultaneously born in several bodies at the same time, and everybody would die at the same time. Some people are deaf or dumb, while others are not. The actions of different people take place in different times. And so on (Solomon 1987:185). However, these reasons are not convincing, in so far as all these differences are only applicable to different *antaḥkaraṇas* and bodies. It could be argued that the experiencers of all these differences must be different, because the experiences are different. Yet due to the constructed nature of experience, the difference must occur only in the *buddhi*'s part of experience, not in that of consciousness.

One consciousness should do the job of having many simultaneous experiences, without paying the price that the theory of plurality of *puruṣa*s must pay. There is no reason why the phenomenal flavor devoid of individual distinction and intentional content could not be shared by all sentient beings as one and the same consciousness. The problems of individuation and particular one-on-one interactions of consciousnesses and minds would be avoided. One would expect that, at the absence of individuating or spatial

qualities, all consciousnesses should have collapsed into one. And if the interaction between consciousness and the mind takes place due to the mind's irresistible attraction toward the phenomenalizing element, one consciousness would obviate the need to explain the mind's inexplicable preference for this, but not other, consciousness. The fact that consciousness appears only in creatures, who have mental faculty, but not in rocks, mountains, and probably not in plants, is explained by the exclusive capacity of minds to "reflect" consciousness. Let us call this version of consciousness-mind dualism a "dualism with single consciousness theory."

A dualism with single consciousness theory resembles panpsychism, especially its recent variation—cosmopsychism.[33] Panpsychism is the view that mentality is the property of all things, and "every concrete system, or object, either has a mind of its own or is ultimately constituted by systems endowed with minds of their own" (Shani 2015:391). Most contemporary forms of panpsychism adhere to "micropsychism" or "constitutive panpsychism," that is, to the view that concrete objects—such as rocks or tables—do not necessarily have minds of their own, but rather their constitutive ultimate microelements have mental properties. Cosmopsychism, however, attributes mental properties to the cosmos as a whole as the only ontological ultimate. This is a model of priority monism, according to which objects with and without minds of their own are all parts of the conscious whole and its derivatives (408). Dualism with single consciousness resembles cosmopsychism in that in both theories consciousness is an all-pervasive, non-reducible real and is a whole, rather than a constitutive part. However, while in cosmopsychism matter is derivative of consciousness, in dualism with single consciousness theory consciousness is ontologically separate from matter. Panpsychism and cosmopsychism both aim at avoiding the problem of the emergence of mind from matter but are not ready to pay the price of mind-body dualism in the form of its interaction problem.[34]

Dualism with single consciousness, however, is a version of consciousness-matter dualism, and assisted by a theory of mirror-like interaction, it does not pay the price of Cartesian mind-matter dualism. The advantage of dualism with single consciousness over cosmopsychism is that it collaborates better

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[33] Cosmopsychism has been discussed in the works of Jaskolla and Buck, Mathews, Nagasawa, Wager, and Shani (Shani 2015:406–407).

[34] Cosmopsychism seems to be closer to Advaita non-dualism. On the affinities and differences between these two views, see Gasparri 2019:130–142.

with the scientific worldview, which prefers to exclude consciousness from the natural world. If matter is derivative of consciousness, as cosmopsychists argue, then consciousness has an impact on the natural world and natural sciences need to take consciousness into account. It is undesirable from the perspective of current scientific paradigms, as consciousness does not promote our understanding of the natural world but rather unnecessarily complicates it. On the other hand, dualism with single consciousness, just like any other kind of consciousness-matter dualism, in a tandem with the theory of mirror interaction, postulates the existence of consciousness but denies its impact on the natural world.

To counteract the problems of individuation and particular one-on-one interactions of consciousnesses and minds, the theory of dualism with a single consciousness is not the only option. Another possibility is giving up on Sāṃkhya strong dualism in favor of weak, "emergent," dualism. Under this theory, there is multiplicity of consciousnesses, but these consciousnesses are not initially independent, but only emergent from the beginningless undifferentiation between consciousness and the mind. This theory, which may be called "emergent dualism," would imply that individual existence and plurality of consciousnesses is due to plurality of *antaḥkaraṇas*, from which consciousness emerges. The complete duality between consciousness and matter would only be achieved in *kaivalya*, whereas prior to that there is only an aspiration toward duality and a growing degree of duality and independence. It should be noted that this kind of duality would not emerge from a single substance, but rather from a kind of metaphysical indistinguishability, where materiality and phenomenality are not clearly demarcated or fully formed. There are some indications that this position has been accepted among some early Sāṃkhyas, as we have seen in Haribhadrasūri's quote of Āsuri (Qvarnström 2012:401, 406). It is also close to Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's account of the emergence of free self in the process of the mind's dissociating from the self, although Bhattacharyya recognizes that such an account would only be accurate from the perspective of the mind, whereas from the perspective of the self it has always been free from the mind and incapable of modification (Bhattacharyya 1983a:140).

Emergent dualism resembles epiphenomenalism in that consciousness is an emergent entity, which has no top-bottom impact on matter. At the same time, consciousness does not emerge from pure matter, which would bring the hard problem back, but rather from a metaphysically indeterminate

proto-being, where both the material and the phenomenal elements are equal potentialities. Nor is there a bottom-top impact of matter on consciousness once it emerges. Perhaps, it would be more precise to say that what emerges is duality from the primordial non-duality. The upshot of emergent duality is that individuation of consciousness, as well as its interactions with a particular mind, are determined by the beginningless and real indistinction between pairs of minds and consciousness-es. There might still be a question of how consciousnesses remain individuated after they achieve complete separation from the minds, which used to accommodate them, and, perhaps, at this stage many become one,[35] and a theory of emergent dualism—relevant for the stage of incomplete differentiation—is replaced by the theory of dualism with single consciousness.

Emergent dualism also resembles panprotopsychism. Panprotopsychism is the view that consciousness, characterized by phenomenal properties, is not fundamental. What is fundamental is a proto-consciousness, which has proto-phenomenal properties (such as unexperienced qualia), and consciousness arises due to combination of proto-phenomenal properties. Another close theory is neutral monism, according to which the fundamental stuff of the universe is neither matter nor mind, but rather a neutral stuff, from which emerge both mind and matter (Wishon 2017:51–70). Emergent dualism, however, is different from both of these theories in that it takes as fundamental not only the single source of duality but also the emergent duality no longer reducible to its source once it arises. Emergent dualism is committed to the ontological independence of consciousness from matter, exponentially increasing through the stages of differentiation, until it reaches its telos in complete separation. The goal of this theory is to preserve the commitment to Sāṃkhya dualism, whereas avoiding the problems of individuation and interaction with particular minds.

Whether the theory of dualism with single consciousness or the theory of emergent dualism is adopted, consciousness should be regarded as the phenomenal mirror for matter. It serves in a double role of being the phenomenal background, upon which qualia and intentional contents appear, and at the same time being itself a representandum (*bimba*), the information about which is represented by the mind/brain in the form of the "I-notion" and projected back into consciousness. The question may arise: If the mind represents consciousness, does it not mean that it somehow interacts with it?

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[35] As K.C. Bhattacharyya also suggests in his discussion of plurality of *puruṣa*s (1983a:196–197).

Does it not mean that some form of real contact between the mind and consciousness is a precondition for illusory interaction?

Not necessarily. There should not be a problem stipulating that consciousness and the mind are capable of imaginary interaction, without being capable of real interaction. All we know for sure is that on the phenomenal level, interaction between consciousness and mind is experienced in the form of phenomenal and access consciousness, in the forms of qualia and conscious intentionality. We do not know with certainty whether this phenomenally experienced interaction represents real interaction. It may well be that it does not, that the experienced interaction represents something else, namely the capacity of consciousness to experience and the capacity of the mind and its contents to be experienced. This position of Sāṃkhya is defensible, and it is the source of the viability of consciousness-matter dualism, as well as a plausible solution to the explanatory gap in naturalist explanations of consciousness.

A few words about representationalism of the mirror model of consciousness-matter dualism. The main premise of representationalism is that the phenomenally experienced reality is not reduced to noumenal reality but rather is said to represent the latter. Consciousness-matter dualism postulates that there is one element of phenomenally experienced reality, which is not a representation of anything, but real in a sense—that which makes the phenomenal experience phenomenal—phenomenality itself. It is representable but does not represent anything else. At the same time, phenomenal experience in its representationalist interpretation implies semantic relations between signifiers and signified on different levels, while signifiers may themselves be signified by higher-order representations. Lacan's explorations of the registers of the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic uncover rather complex syntactical relations between representing and represented realities, as well as among the representing signifiers—conscious and unconscious. Representational structure characterizes not only the individual phenomenal experience but also lies in the intersubjective realm of language and society.[36] The game of representations, where the real lurks behind the imaginary, and the imaginary disguises itself as real, may reach its peaks of confusion. The formula "thou art that," misunderstood as identity of differents, governs the kingdom of representations, but it may become a

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[36] On social dimensions of the phenomenal first-person perspective, also see Metzinger 2003:344–353.

magical formula for dissipating the magic, uncovering the bare scaffoldings of false identities. Is Lacan right in holding that the moment of realization is the moment when the real journey begins? Or is it the end, after which no journey is possible, as Śaṅkara would claim? Let us leave these questions open for the time being.

Abbreviations

AKBh	*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*
BS	*Brahmasiddhi*
BSBh	*Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*
BU	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*
BUBh	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*
ChU	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
ChUBh	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*
ĪPK	*Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*
ĪPV	*Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī*
ĪPVV	*Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinīvivṛtivimarśinī*
KśU	*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*
MUBh	*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*
NAS	*Nyāyānusāra*
NV	*Nyāyabhāṣyavārttika*
PP	*Pañcapādikā*
PPV	*Pañcapādikāvivaraṇa*
PrUBh	*Praṣṇa Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*
PSV	*Paramārthasāravṛtti*
ṚV	*Ṛgveda*
SB	*Siddhāntabindu*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
ŚDV	*Śivadṛṣṭivṛtti*
SE	*The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*
SLS	*Siddhāntaleśasaṅgraha*
SŚ	*Saṃkṣepaśārīraka*
ŚU	*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*
TĀ	*Tantrāloka*
TĀV	*Tantrālokaviveka*
TK	*Tattvakaumudī*
TS	*Tattvasaṅgraha*
TSP	*Tattvasaṅgrahapañjikā*

TUBh	*Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣya*
Upad.	*Upadeśasāhasrī*
VP	*Vākyapadīya*
VPVr I	*Vākyapadīyavṛtti, Kāṇḍa I*
VS	*Vājaseneyi Saṃhitā*
YS	*Yogasūtra*
YSBh	*Yogasūtrabhāṣya*
YV	*Yogavārttika*

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Index

For the benefit of digital users, indexed terms that span two pages (e.g., 52–53) may, on occasion, appear on only one of those pages.