A Range of (No-)Self Views

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ABSTRACT

There are many different views on (no-)self in contemporary philosophy of mind, and some of them are informed by Buddhist philosophy. What are their relations with traditional Buddhist positions? I start with the pre-reflective self from the phenomenological tradition, taking it as a central notion on which the others are hinged. Then I discuss the narrative self, the robust self (in relation to *ātman*), the hard-reductionist non-self (in relation to Abhidarma), the reflexive self (in relation to Yogācāra), and the performative self (in relation to Madhyamaka). As a conclusion I sketch a no-self view that is roughly based on the Yogācāra view, and that integrates important aspects of the others.

'It is not enough to leave, you should stay gone' (on a wall in Glasgow)

INTRODUCTION

This article is about some different (no-)self views that are available in Buddhism and contemporary philosophy of mind.[1] Its main object is to make clear that there are more positions than is sometimes suggested in discussions about this topic, and to show what the gains and costs of each of these positions are. I will sketch six notions of (no-)self: the narrative self, the pre-reflective self, the reductionist no-self (to be found in early Abhidharma, among others), the robust self (or *ātman*), the reflexivist view on no-self (in Yogācāra), and the performative no-self (in Madhymaka).

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[1] With thanks to Vimalavajri, Ratnaguna and Dhivan for helping me with language as well as content.

The second of these – the pre-reflective self – is in a sense the centrepiece of this article, because one can see other views as being arranged around it. This pre-reflective self is a notion that can be found under different names in various thinkers, most prominently in the phenomenological school. It refers to the first-person givenness of experience, the sense that it is I, and not someone else, who is experiencing. To my mind, the clearest exposition of this is to be found in Dan Zahavi's *Subjectivity and Selfhood* (2005).

As always, it is good to start by looking at a definition of what we are talking about. There are many meanings of the word 'self'. The contemporary philosopher of mind Galen Strawson identifies twenty-one different meanings (Zahavi, 2005, p.103), and no doubt even more can be found if you zoom in. But not all of them are relevant, and I will start by describing two of them: the pre-reflective self and the narrative self. The pre-reflective self is the quiet and non-articulated presence of myself in every experience. When this becomes reflectively aware of itself, it is extended and becomes the narrative self, which is represented to itself by memory and language. I will expand a bit more on these last two, starting with the narrative self.

THE NARRATIVE SELF

We are narrative selves (also called 'auto-biographical selves', 'historical selves') because we are always living in stories, and we structure our lives according to these stories. When someone asks you who you are, you are likely to tell some kind of story. We tell the stories of our lives to each other so that we come to know each other, and we tell our stories to ourselves so that separate events fall into a context and become meaningful. Alasdair MacIntyre, one of the first to explore this notion of narrativity in his book *After Virtue,* stressed that our narratives are socially and culturally conditioned. They are just as much (or more) a product of our environment as of ourselves. We find ourselves in the stories of our cultures, countries, social class, families, before we can even think of beginning to spin our own stories. He also says that our notion of identity is dependent on narrativity. First there is a story, and then we abstract a main character from that story, and from that we construct our identity. When we speak of 'seeking ourselves', 'finding our true self', 'know thyself' etc., we are not necessarily speaking of seeking a particular entity that is a self, but we are looking for a core set of values, beliefs, character traits, and so forth, that play a central role in the narratives we live by.

Daniel Dennet, a well-known proponent of this view of a narrative self, says there is an evolutionary reason we tell stories:

> Our fundamental tactic of self-protection, self-control, and self-definition is not building dams or spinning webs, but telling stories – and more particularly concocting and controlling the story we tell others, and

ourselves, about who we are… we (unlike professional human story tellers) do not consciously and deliberately figure out what narratives to tell and how to tell them; like spiderwebs, our tales are spun but for the most part we don't spin them; they spin us. Our human consciousness, and our narrative selfhood, is their product, not their source. (1991, p.640)

There are strong and weak versions of this narrative notion of self. The strong version holds that there is nothing more to the self that this narrative self, there is no deeper layer than that. Dennet is one of the people who hold this view. It has the benefit of explaining our sense of being a person, while at the same time it is relatively easy to show how it is socially constructed, so that an independently existing self can easily be denied. However, it can be said that this is just defeating a straw man, because there is a deeper sense of self that is overlooked. Another way of putting this is that it does not accommodate the experiential richness of subjectivity. The weak version of the narrative notion of the self sees its importance, but insists that it presupposes a more fundamental notion of self, so that there must be deeper layer to it. That is what Zahavi calls the pre-reflective, or minimal, self.

THE PRE-REFLECTIVE SELF

Pre-reflective self (also 'minimal self', 'perspectival self', '*Urbewußtsein*' in Husserl) is a notion that Zahavi found in the classical phenomenologists, mainly Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. For these it was a side-issue, whereas Zahavi took it centre stage and explored and elaborated it further. The main thought is that every experience is necessarily first-personally given. If I see a blue sky, there is an immediate knowledge (that is immune to error) that it is *me* who is seeing it. It doesn't make sense to ask 'are you sure it's you that's seeing it and not someone else?'. I cannot be in doubt as to who is having the experience. I can be in error as to whether this is my car, and even about whether it is my arm or not, through illusions with mirrors. But I can never be in error as to whether I am having this toothache or not. It would be the same as to moan with pain by mistake, mistaking myself for someone else (Ganeri, 2011, p.188). In other words, there is an inherent *mineness* to every experience. Every experience is given immediately, non-critically and non-inferentially as mine.

This first-person givenness corresponds to what-it-is-likeness of consciousness. There is something 'it is like' to remember a painful event, to rub a smooth surface, to think of a mathematical problem, to taste an apple. This relates to what is sometimes called 'the hard problem of consciousness': how to explain the experiential qualities of consciousness from objective cognitive functions. I can describe perception, behaviour, memory, and so

forth, and still wonder: why is accompanied by subjective experience? In other words, there is a difference in experience if you look at something from a third- or a first-person point of view. This what-it-is-like-ness is what makes our experience rich: it is the difference between experiencing dry H_2O and wet water, in a manner of speaking.

Another way of putting this is to say that consciousness is self-intimating. This also captures nicely the sense of intimacy with yourself – you feel at home in your consciousness. What this also does is deny that consciousness (and experience) is anonymous, and that this sense of self is merely a neutral self-referencing, such as when a machine refers to itself. We can imagine a robot that can register when it is touched, and program it to refer to itself and respond accordingly, but it is hard to imagine that this robot would actually experience things, that it 'would be like something' to be a robot (Nagel, 1979). This is a recurring theme in science-fiction. In the HBO series Westworld for example, the central theme is how a group of highly sophisticated robots that cannot from the outside be distinguished from humans slowly develop self-consciousness through self-referencing programs that are built into them. In the beginning of the story they have no sense of 'what it is like' to be a robot, while later they develop this sense of 'being there'.

Still another way of bringing this out is to distinguish between perspectival and personal ownership (Zahavi, 2011, pp.61–4). When I'm joyfully anticipating a future holiday, for example, both these senses of ownership are there. The joy and the thoughts appear to me, are given to me in my particular perspective, and in that way there is a sense of owning them. And there is also a stronger, personal sense of ownership, connected with a sense of agency; I identify with it, they are *my* thoughts, *my* fantasies, *my* enjoyment. Normally both these senses of ownership occur together, but in pathological cases, such as thought insertion, they can appear separately. Someone can experience a thought as coming from another person *in their own consciousness*. To experience a thought from another person is quite ordinary: we do it all the time when we communicate with other people. But another person's thought *in our own consciousness* is quite exceptional (and scary). What this shows is that one can differentiate between both senses of ownership. It is possible to perspectivally own an experience without owning it personally. This minimal ownership corresponds to the mineness of the pre-reflective self.

It is important to keep in mind its non-attentive, non-articulated, implicit character. It is easy to overlook this minimal sense of self. As soon as I start reflecting on it, it has changed. A well-known little dramatic anecdote from Sartre can illustrate this (Sartre, 1985). A man is on all fours in a hotel corridor somewhere in Paris in the 1950s, peeking through a keyhole at… (Sartre does not say what it is). He is completely absorbed in whatever he is looking at. The man is pre-reflectively aware of himself. If his left knee is slightly hurting, for

example, he might shift his weight, which shows that he is aware of himself on that level. Then suddenly he hears a slight cough behind him. He startles, turns around, and to his horror there is a person standing there *who sees him*. Whether this person is friendly, condemning, or just neutral, is beside the point. What matters is that the man on the ground suddenly sees himself *through the eyes of the other*, and objectifies himself. He sees himself as a man of such-and-such age, with maybe a dirty spot on his suit, in a shameful position, and so forth. In other words: there is a sudden shift from pre-reflective to reflective self, and with this the man is *thrown* into a social world. Another, less dramatic example, also from Sartre: I am sitting alone in a café and wonder if I still have enough cigarettes (his choice of examples show something of Sartre's lifestyle). I take my packet out of my pocket and start counting them. Then a friend comes in and asks me, What are you doing? I say, I'm counting my cigarettes. Before my friend asked me I was absorbed in the counting, in the mode of pre-reflective awareness of myself. When my friend asked me I saw myself as from his point of view, from the outside, objectified myself, and thus changed my mode of self-awareness. But this can only happen because there already was the implicit awareness of myself: the pre-reflective mineness is the basis of the reflective mineness. I can fail to articulate this minimal self, but I cannot fail to be it.

This shift from pre-reflective to reflective awareness is an important one. It is a discontinuity, a leap from a naive looking at the world from the inside to an objectifying way of looking, as if from the outside. It is also a leap in the social world with its rules and standards, and into an ethical world, if ethics are to be taken as a social phenomenon.

Because the minimal self is pre-reflective it is also elusive, like the world at your back. I can never see it. When I turn around it will be the world before me, even when I use a mirror or a camera or suchlike. Trying to see it is like trying to catch your own shadow. That is not to say it is unconscious: it is in the middle of our waking consciousness, we just look past it all the time, just as we look past the quality of sight itself. This implies that there is no subject/object split yet. Which might seem contradictory, because a mineness implies an otherness; but although there is a mineness, it is not distinctive from otherness yet, the two are embedded within each other. The pre-reflective self is not something that stands opposed to the stream of consciousness, but is immersed in it, it is a component of it.

A metaphor that Zahavi likes to use (it was originally from William James) is of a rainbow above a waterfall. The waterfall is the stream of experiences that flows continuously on and on, and the rainbow is the sense of self that appears above it. This nicely shows how the pre-reflective self is dependent on the stream, while at the same time different from it, and that it renews itself all the time, just as the stream does.

An implication of all this is that consciousness is reflexive: it bends back on itself, so to speak. It is always given to itself. This reflexivity is explained by Husserl through the idea of inner time consciousness, which is another topic that I will not go into here (but see Zahavi, 2005, ch.3). In other words: consciousness is self-illuminating, like a lamp that shines on itself as well as the world. I will come back to this later.

Zahavi calls his view a 'two-tier view of the self'. The self, according to him, is this minimal or pre-reflective self as an invariant structure in consciousness, which is a basis for the thicker, more fleshed-out sense of self that is the narrative self. Taken together they present the full picture of what the self is. Its merit is, to my mind, that it saves the richness of the phenomena (it does not try to explain away the phenomena of self-experience and being a person) and at the same time avoids positing an absolute self. The costs are that it there is still an invariant structure that is difficult to defend, according to some of his critics, and that he makes more of experience than strict science allows, according to other critics.

Zahavi contrasts his view with the reductionist no-self view, outlined below. These are the views of thinkers like Hume, Metzinger, and what he takes to be the Buddhist view. The question is whether his 'self-view' could not count as a 'no-self view' from a Buddhist point of view, however. I think it could very well be defended as such. To my mind it is similar to (but not the same as), the Pudgalavāda view, but that question would need more research. For now I will sketch the position of the thinkers that Zahavi is distancing himself from.

THE REDUCTIONIST NO-SELF

The (hard-)reductionist views hold that the self can be reduced to something more basic: perceptions, brain states, the skandhas, or something else. Their claim is that this reduction results in a more truthful description of reality. The classic quote for this position is from Hume:

> [W]hen I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception'; and therefore we are 'nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. (In Albahari, 2011, p.90)

Contemporary reductionist views like this are found in Parfit and Metzinger, two analytic philosophers of mind. I will leave Parfit aside for reasons of space, but Metzinger holds that something is only real if it can be explained by natural

science, and by that standard he finds the self wanting. For all scientific and philosophical purposes we can safely do away with the notion of self, it does no explanatory work. He admits that there is a sense of self, but that is based on a cognitive deficit. It is an illusion created by an interplay of complex brain-states. When we talk of a self, we mistake a model for reality (Zahavi, 2005, p.102).

A Buddhist version of hard reductionism is the early Abhidharma view. A person can be reduced to the *skandha*s, and the *skandha*s are heaps of basic mental and physical events, the *dharma*s. So the self, just like all composite objects, can be reduced to these basic constituents, there is nothing above or beyond them, just as a chariot is nothing above or beyond the parts it is made of. Another image that is often used is that of a torch that is moved around in the dark, so that there seems to be a circle, while in reality there are just the momentary events of the torch at different places. This reminds very much of the last sentence from Hume quoted above: 'which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.'

In this view, the illusion of self is a useful fiction, as it is supposed to have evolutionary advantages to think of 'this organism here' as a self that needs to be fed and multiplied and protected. But in Buddhism it is also the cause of *duḥkha*, so that puts the whole issue of usefulness in a different light. But whether it is useful or not, it is still a fiction, an imputation of the mind, and does nothing. The real (causal) explanatory work is done by something more basic. Dependent on what form of hard reductionism one holds, this basis can be perceptions (Hume), brain states (Metzinger), or the *dharma*s (Abhidharmikas). Consciousness is in reality an anonymous process, experienced by no one. It would conform better to reality if we said 'there is a toothache' rather than 'I have a toothache'. This sounds familiar to Buddhists, and indeed there is quite a lot of cross-over between Buddhists and hard reductionists, so that sometimes this position is identified as 'the' Buddhist position. Metzinger repeatedly compares his scientistic recognition of the illusionary character of the self with the insight that is the Buddhist goal of enlightenment, and also Parfit compares his view to the Buddhist one. Also from the Buddhist side one can also find many references to Hume, Parfit and Metzinger.

What is attractive about the reductionist views is that it does not presuppose any entities except the perceivable ones; it wields Ockham's razor well. It is economic, avoids speculation, agrees with a healthy scepticism, and restricts itself to what our science can show us. This was an important motivation for Hume, as it is for Metzinger. The main costs are that there is no room for the first-personal givenness of experience, the what-it-is-likeness (this aspect of experience is generally downplayed or negated in expositions of this view), and that it is counter-intuitive.

THE ROBUST SELF

The view of the self that the hard-reductionists are responding to and distancing themselves from, is what Galen Strawson calls 'the robust self'. It is the self as an independent, autonomous entity that we know as *ātman*, the eternal soul, the Cartesian *cogito,* and so forth. It is not just a philosophical view however. More importantly it is an everyday assumption from which we live, our default way of thinking, something that is very intuitive for most people. Strawson gives a good summary of what this is supposed to entail. A robust sense of self is: a) a single mental 'thing' that is both synchronically and diachronically unified, b) a subject of experience, a feeler of feelings, c) a doer of deeds (an agent), and d) having a certain character or personality (MacKenzie, 2011, p.241).

The gains of this view are considerable. Firstly it is very intuitive, which in itself is a good thing. All other things being equal, it makes sense to go with your intuition. Secondly it has a great explanatory force. It explains the unity that we feel ourselves to be, both the momentary unity and unity through time. Thirdly it explains the sense of agency and responsibility, which is important for ethics, and which is a problem for all the other views. And fourthly it is capable of providing us with a deep source of authenticity from which we can live. The costs are even higher though, and that is why it is almost universally agreed that we should resist this view. The main problem is that it presupposes a duality: matter and spirit or some variation of that. Then the problem arises how to connect these two, which has proven to be very difficult, if not impossible, to do in a satisfactory way.

THE REFLEXIVE NO-SELF

A view closer to Zahavi is the reflexive no-self view, presented by Dreyfus (2011), by Krueger (2011) and by Ganeri (2012). All three are contemporary philosophers of mind who are are explicitly taking in ancient Buddhist philosophy, and they connect this reflexivist view with Yogācāra thinkers, more specifically Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (Dreyfuss, 2011, and Krueger, 2011) and Vasubandhu (Ganeri, 2012). It is a form of reductionism as well, but it might be called soft reductionism in contrast to the hard reductionism described before. The main difference is that they have the stream of experiences as the reduction base, which allows them to keep the what-it-is-likeness of experience. Like Zahavi, the reflexivists (as I will call them) hold that consciousness is reflexive, i.e. they agree with Zahavi about the minimal self, the inherent non-attentive mineness that is a component of every experience. The point of disagreement with Zahavi is that Zahavi holds that this mineness is an invariant structure in consciousness that has a diachronical unity, i.e. it stays the same through time. The mineness that I am experiencing now is the same mineness that I experienced when I was a schoolboy and when I was a young man, it

does not change over time. The reflexivists do not agree with that: they think Zahavi is presupposing something that is not needed to explain the phenomena. Zahavi, on the other hand, says that the reflexivists are not seeing the obvious as a result of their Buddhist orientation.

In the reflexivist view, there is indeed this pre-reflective mineness that is constitutive of experience, and therefore inherent in it, but there is no need to state that it is a stable structure just because it is always there. Like experience itself, it comes and goes every single moment, it is a constantly changing stream. The metaphor of the rainbow that Zahavi found so apt can be turned against him: just as the rainbow is constantly renewing itself, so the mineness of experience is always there as 'a constant hum of presence to oneself' (Ganeri, 2012, p.121), but there is no need to take it as a unity through time.

Another aspect of this pre-reflective mineness is that it is 'innocent', so to speak. It is ethically neutral, or rather pre-ethical, just as an animal or a young child is pre-ethical. It is only with the dramatic transition that Sartre tried to capture with his anecdote of the man in the Paris hotel, when the reflective self comes into being, that this changes. The self perceives itself as an object in the world, alone in the midst of a thousand and one other objects, with nothing to hold on to, and identifies out of a deep fear with all kinds of narratives: cultural, national, familial, personal, subconscious, superconscious, and others. This is when the illusion of a persistent self is created, and at the same time an alienation, with the possiblity of suffering that comes with it. This is also, to repeat, when a social and ethical sense of self comes into being.

I described the reflexive self in non-Buddhist terms, because it is valid as such, independent of whether it can correctly be interpreted as a Yogācāra view. But having said that, it has in fact been connected to the Yogācāra view by Dreyfus, Krueger and Ganeri, independently of each other (as I have mentioned), and I think very fruitfully. For the sake of brevity, I will leave Krueger and Ganeri aside, and focus on what Dreyfus (2011) says.

Dreyfus makes a connection between Zahavi's notion of the pre-reflective self and the *ālaya-vijñāna* (basic or store-consciousness). The classic Yogācāra doctrine distinguishes eight modes of consciousness: the first six are the standard modes of consciousness connected to the six senses, and then there are the *manas* and the *ālaya-vijñāna* as the seventh and eight. The *manas* could be described as the ego-consciousness, and the *ālaya-vijñāna*, according to Dreyfus, is connected to our sense of embodiment, and accounts for the difference between a dead and a living body (2011, p.144). It provides for a basic sense of aliveness, a dim sense of being there in relation to our direct environment. He uses the example of walking on a hilly foothpath, and suddenly loosing balance. Before it happened he was already aware of himself, but in a dim and subliminal way, and because of the falling, the sense of his body comes into sharp focus. In this way the pre-reflective sense of self suddenly transforms into a reflexive sense of

self, he experienced a sense of agency (in this case negatively, as a loss of agency), which is, in Yogācāra terms, the *manas* that takes the *ālaya-vijñāna* as an object and turns it into a ego. This is the same sudden leap that I described before with the examples from Sartre.

In other words, consciousness is always perceiving itself. When we perceive something, if only a thought or an emotional state, we know it to be our own perception, and thereby we reveal our consciousness to ourselves. The notion of *svasaṃvedanā* (self-perception) that Dignāga coined is the Yogācāra term for this reflexivity, the self-intimating character of consciousness. It is sometimes also referred to as the self-luminosity of consciousness. Dignāga and other Yogacarins hold that consciousness is self-luminous (*svaprakāśa*). The classic metaphor is the lamp that not only shines on its environment but also illuminates itself. Like the lamp, consciousness might be directed towards it objects, but in the process also reveals itself, hence *svasaṃvedanā*, the always being there for oneself.

To my mind, this term *svasaṃvedanā* also captures nicely that this pre-reflective mineness is a form of *vedanā* (sensation). In the chain of the twelve *nidana*s, *vedanā* is followed by *taṇhā* (craving) and *upādāna*, (appropriation), constituting the well-known gap between sensing and grasping that we jump over unmindfully. In other words: the transition from the pre-reflective to the reflective sense of self is another way of describing the gap between *vedanā* and *upādāna*. In so far as one can hold the sense of inherent mineness without identifying it with a story (the *ālaya-vijñāna* could maybe also be called the *story*-consciousness, containing all the narratives), grasping is lessened.

An implication of this, I think, is that the enlightened mind can still have mineness of experience. Everything can still be experienced in the first-person mode, there is in itself nothing unenlightened about that. What is called 'the revolution of the basis' (*āśraya-parāvṛtti*) is not so much the ceasing of the first-person givenness of experience, but the ceasing of the habitual proces of identification, which, if it is done definitely, is a life-changing event.

Supposedly there are deep meditational states of mind called 'cessation' (*nirodha-samāpatti*) in which there is no experience whatsoever, and even this minimal self is not there. This is sometimes taken to imply that all experience is a product of subtle grasping (for example in Burbea, 2014 pp.251–53), but I think that is a wrong conclusion. It merely shows that whenever there is experience, there is also this minimal sense of self. But that was already implied in the above, and does not show that experience as such is the product of grasping. If an enlightened person were to leave the meditational state of cessation and go to the local store for an alms-round, for example, there would again be experience (according to this view), and therefore this minimal sense of mineness, but of course they would not cease to be enlightened. The

alternative would be to hold that enlightened experience is anonymous, which would amount to what is described above as the hard reductionist view.

THE PERFORMATIVE SELF

The picture sketched above is that of the reflective self as a source of *duḥkha* coming up in the gap between *svasaṃvedanā* (the pre-reflective sense of self) and identification with a story. This is where another take on the notion of self can come in, which I believe is what Mādhyamikas like Candrakīrti were pointing at (Ganeri, 2007, ch.7). It hangs together with different ways of using language. The first and most straightforward way of using language is to refer to things 'out there' – tables, pots, chariots, selves. When someone says 'I have a toothache', we assume that there is something called 'toothache' out there in the world, however vague it might be, and that there is an I that is having it, and 'I have a toothache' refers to this state of affairs. Another way of using language, however, is what is sometimes called the performative mode. Classic examples are making promises or taking vows. By doing that you are not using words to refer to a state of affairs that is already there, but you bring something into being, in this case a commitment. You *do* something with language; it is an act. Wittgenstein already pointed out that most uses of the word 'I' are done is this performative mode, and this is also what Candrakīrti is saying, according to Ganeri (2011, pp.186–90). When we use the word 'I' we are not referring to something at all, as the whole range of views so far, including the Yogācāra, seems to assume (even when denying there is a referent, they are still thinking it is referring). When I say 'I have a toothache' I am not asserting a state of affairs, but I am laying claim to the experience of toothache as my own, in the performative mode. We are appropriating experiences and events, in other words the *skandha*s, performing a self rather than being one, or in other words, enacting a self and thus becoming one. In this way the self can be seen as a proces of constant coming into being and disappearing, to which the terms 'existent' or 'not existent' do not apply.[2]

In a certain sense this is the most elegant and minimal view. Its beauty is its simplicity, and that it does not commit to any views and does not assert or deny anything. The downside, however, is that it does not explain much either. For someone who is puzzled by the many questions that come up in this territory, it does not help much. But then, of course, the Madhyamika might say these questions are part of the very problem.

[2] A comment from Dhivan on this paragraph: 'The important point for Candrakīrti is whether or not one believes that the self exists. When one realises that the self only appears to exist, one may in some sense continue to 'perform' as a self but in a deeper way it is with clarity about what is happening.'

CONCLUSION

There are many other possible views on the question of the self, and questions relating to it. Especially questions concerning intersubjectivity, with concerns about ethics in their wake, are obviously very important, but they were all left out for reasons of space. However I do want to mention Zahavi's *Self and Other* (2014), in which he argues that the pre-reflective self is intersubjectively constituted, making room for a deep source of altruism.

I have tried to present the different views more or less neutrally, noting what I regard as the merits and costs of each, which I believe is a fruitful way of assessing the merits of a given view. But I think that, as a result, it is clear that we should resist the hard reductionist view. In my experience with practising Buddhists, many seem to think they should endorse it, although they are not always aware of its implications. It is often presented as 'the' alternative to the *ātman* or Cartesian self, and therefore the only option available for a Buddhist. But I hope I have made it clear it flies in the face of the facts, namely that we necessarily experience ourselves, arguably also in an enlightened state – unless we imagine the enlightened person to be a sort of zombie-Buddha, which is a logical possiblity but hardly appealing (Siderits, 2011).

I believe a more fruitful way of looking at the question of non-self is to look at a two-tier model. The level that is closest to the surface is the narrative self, of which it is relatively easy to see its non-substantial character, at least theoretically. The deeper layer is the pre-reflective self, which is easily overlooked, but which is a necesarry condition of human experience. As the discussion above shows, there can be different opinions about it character, but to my mind it cannot be negated. What I called the reflexivist (Yogācāra) view makes the most sense to me. It has all the merits of the two-tier view of Zahavi, most importantly that it saves the phenomena, while at the same time it is able to accommodate the insights of impermanence, *duhkha,* and non-self. What was called the performative self (associated with the Madhyamaka view) can, as I see it, be integrated into this overall picture. It zooms in on the process of 'selfing', and how it is done in the infamous gap between sensation and grasping, and supplements rather than replaces the reflexivist view.

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