



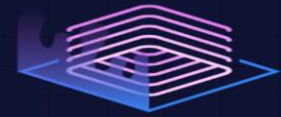
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## Self-image, memory, and sense of personal identity

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### **Abstract:**

Is it necessary for an individual to possess conscious awareness of their actions when observing, desiring, or contemplating something? Can thought be regarded as self-intimating, borrowing the terminology of Gilbert Ryle? Until recently, philosophers held the prevailing belief that this assertion was incontrovertible. According to Descartes, it is self-evident that the mind, in its capacity as a thinking entity, cannot possess any thoughts of which it is not consciously aware. This notion, often attributed to Descartes, is expressed in his Fourth Replies (CSM II 171). Descartes is commonly attributed with the origination of the phrase. According to Locke, it is inherently impossible for an individual to have a perception without simultaneously being aware of their own act of perceiving. According to the assertions made in Essay 2.XXVII.9, it is understood that our perception occurs through several sensory modalities such as hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, meditating, and volition. Furthermore, the statement made in Essay 1.II.5 posits that the notion of imprinting something on the mind without the mind's conscious awareness appears to be scarcely comprehensible. Moreover, Hume posits in Treatise 1.IV.2 that "consciousness is the means by which we acquire knowledge of all mental actions and sensations." The notion that self-awareness of one's own ideas is a prerequisite for consciousness has been widely accepted among philosophers who adhere to the self-intimation thesis. However, it is worth noting that this belief is often assumed without substantial empirical evidence to substantiate its validity. Notably, Dinnaga, an Indian Buddhist philosopher from the period of 480 to 540 A.D., and his critic Dharmakrti, both staunchly advocate for the concept of self-intimation. Dinnaga also supports the notion of self-intimation. In India, there exists a contrasting perspective to that of the Western world, wherein the notion that individuals possess inherent awareness of their own mental states is considered heretical. Consequently, individuals were compelled to provide substantiating proof to support their claims. The argument presented by the individual is closely linked to the Buddhist perspective on this fundamental issue, since it explores the intricate connection between memory and the notion of personal continuity. Dinnaga's conclusion is based on particular empirical evidence on the characteristics of memory, and his line of reasoning is intricately connected to the philosophical framework of Buddhism in addressing this fundamental quandary.



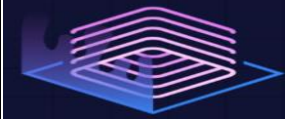
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## Introduction

What are several potential interpretations that might be derived from this thesis statement? It is widely acknowledged that various mental states, encompassing ideas, emotions, sensory experiences, and desires, exhibit a characteristic referred to as a "objective aspect." The mind, by its inherent nature, is oriented towards a particular aim or objective. This assertion is applicable not alone to conscious ideas, but also to those that manifest during the state of dreaming, as well as to instances of imagination and errors in perception. Based on Brentano's conceptualization, a "intentional object" refers to a mental construct that exists solely inside the realm of ideas, devoid of any necessity for physical instantiation. Dinnaga's philosophical framework places significant importance on distinguishing the objective substance of a thought from any external object that may be associated with the notion, such as through causal connections. However, it should be noted that this aspect is not a primary focus of Dinnaga's thesis on self-intimation. The presence or absence of a chair that is explicitly connected to the concept is inconsequential. The fundamental aspect of my contemplation regarding a chair is its inherent chairness as seen by the individual in question. This statement holds true irrespective of the presence or absence of a chair that is explicitly associated with the idea.

When Dinnaga postulated that cognition has an inherent subjective personality, the precise connotation of his statement becomes more intricate to ascertain. The intended purpose of this characteristic is to foster introspection on an idea, so distinguishing it from a mere object. This interpretation is widely regarded as the most significant and prominent understanding of the term. It is conceivable that the individual in question was contemplating a direct comparison between paintings and photography, as indicated by his statement. A photograph inherently depicts a subject, however it possesses distinct attributes, including contrast, brightness, and sharpness. These qualities primarily stem from the technological aspects employed in capturing the image, rather than being contingent upon the specific subject being taken. These qualities are observable in all images. When a professional observer detects an undeveloped or overexposed photograph, their attention becomes exclusively focused on these particular attributes of the image, perhaps leading to a lack of awareness of other elements present in the photograph, such as the inclusion of a human face. Similar observations may be made with paintings, since there exist multiple interpretations of Christ shown on canvas. However, the categorization of a painting as "morbid" or "typically Byzantine," among others, is contingent upon the viewer's response to the subjective characteristics inherent in the artwork.



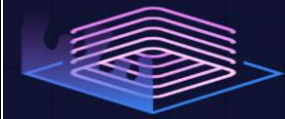
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My objective is not to associate Dinnaga with a theory of mental representation that resembles a picture; instead, my aim is to illustrate how Dinnaga's distinction between the objective and subjective elements of mental states can be established. The rationale for Dinnaga's distinction and the intended purpose of the two portions are now more comprehensible.

Dinnaga proposes that an individual's internal ideas can be regarded with the same level of consideration as outward objects. It is important to acknowledge that Dinnaga has not yet examined the concept of the self-intimation thesis, which posits that every notion possesses a reflexive awareness of itself. The underlying assumption posited in this context is that individuals possess, to some extent, transient instances of self-awareness. I possess the ability to acknowledge my physiological need for sustenance, employ cognitive reasoning to rationalize a distressing dream as a mere figment of the imagination, and discern instances wherein my sensory faculties accurately apprehend tangible entities inside the external environment. According to Dinnaga, the differentiation between second-order concepts and the first-order thoughts they pertain to necessitates the presence of both an objective and a subjective component within each concept. It is evident that during the process of reflecting upon a personal experience, one's focus does not lie on a specific set of neural signals or any other tangible element of one's cognitive state. Clearly, the subject matter at hand does not align with my current focus, necessitating my attention to be directed elsewhere. Once again, the present scenario offers an opportunity to elucidate the differences between paintings and photos. There exists a distinction between a representation of a painting through another painting and a representation of a photograph through another photograph. There is a distinction between creating an original artwork and reproducing an existing one. If the first photo is overexposed, then the object in the second picture is similarly overexposed. The topic depicted in the second image corresponds to the one portrayed in the initial image. The aforementioned rationale may underpin Dinnaga's assertion that engaging in introspective contemplation over one's own ideas facilitates the transition from subjective perspectives to objective viewpoints. The double aspect theory of mental states is based on the distinction between thoughts and thoughts about ideas. This theory is motivated by the observation that the objectual aspect of a second order thought is equivalent to the subjective aspect of a first order thought, and the intended objective of the latter corresponds to the objectual aspect of the former.

The cognition of Dinnaga places significant emphasis on the subjective aspect, highlighting a fundamental facet that I deem noteworthy. Consider the notion that even a portrayal of Christ in the form of a caricature within a picture retains recognizable characteristics associated with Christ. It is possible to capture an image of a chair by photographing a preexisting photograph of said chair, resulting in the retention of a chair representation.



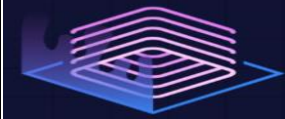
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The presented argument is really persuasive. Suppose I am an eyewitness to an aviation incident, wherein I subsequently recollect both the catastrophic event itself and my personal response to it (e). To recollect the occurrence of an accident, it is imperative to have encountered it firsthand (referred to as e0), as memory is contingent upon prior experiences. Let us consider a hypothetical scenario where e0 and e are assumed to be distinct from each other. Therefore, the risk is heightened due to an endless regression. The inquiry on the recollection of e0 carries an undertone of apprehension. It is conceivable to encounter an experience denoted as e00, which represents an individual's experience of their own experience denoted as e, and this process can be iterated forever by following the aforementioned logical framework.

The possibility of an infinite regress is contingent upon the validity of Dinn\_aga's supplementary assumption, which asserts that each subsequent level is either recalled or possibly remembered. What potential underlying assumption might be present in this context? When Dinn\_aga asserts the notion of retaining recollections of one's own memories, it is necessary to clarify the precise meaning of this statement. According to a particular theoretical perspective, it is posited that the ability to retrieve any past occurrence is potentially attainable. If an individual, denoted as S, undergoes event x, then follows that S will subsequently retain a memory of x.

This assertion is characterized by a bold and daring nature, and if substantiated, it would have the intended result. A legitimate regression would consist of an unending sequence of distinct cognitive occurrences, accompanied by P1, P2, and a refutation of the self-intimation hypothesis. However, is there mutual consensus regarding P3\*, which posits that I possess the capacity to recollect any of my previous encounters? In the subsequent analysis, I will scrutinize a specific piece of evidence to support the aforementioned claim, elucidating how Locke's theory of identity might be employed to reach this deduction. The assertion that P3\* is erroneous is evident, and Dinn\_aga has a dissenting perspective about the Lockean idea of personal identification. Dinn\_aga's objectives can be achieved by the application of a concept that, although not as potent as P3\*, nonetheless proves effective.

One possible option that comes to me is P3. If individual S is exposed to stimulus x at time t1, it is possible that she will engage in prolonged cognitive processing of x beyond time t2, where t2 exceeds t1.

This suggests that there is a temporary ability to remember recent events immediately after their occurrence, even if subsequent forgetfulness ensues. The inverse of this proposition is articulated by P3, which posits that if an individual S has a memory of an event x at time t2, then it follows that S must have experienced x at some earlier time t1, where t2 is greater than t1.



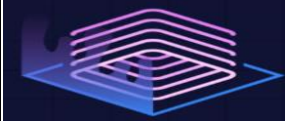
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The subsequent discourse presents Dinn\_ aga's convincing contention in support of the self-intimation hypothesis.

The significance of the conceptual correlation between self-intimation and memory is underscored. In the subsequent section, an elucidation will be provided to demonstrate how contemporary psychological research contradicts the self-intimation idea. I will identify and discuss two faults in Dinn\_ aga's argument. The initial presentation mostly showcases the infinite regress argument in its entirety. Dinn\_ aga's findings do not support the notion that regular first-order experiences include inherent self-intimation. Instead, his research indicates that specific higher-order mental states reach a critical threshold where they acquire self-intimating qualities. Either someone may not perceive pain when they are not experiencing it, or they may fail to recognize intense pain while they are in a state of anguish. The assertion put out by a modified form of the self-intimation thesis posits that self-intimation occurs solely in relation to experiences that exhibit a growing level of complexity. While the confined form of the argument is more persuasive, it is worth noting that the unconstrained version possesses a greater strength than often acknowledged. This implies that there may be an underlying problem in Dinn\_ aga's argument that goes beyond surface-level analysis. I argue that the combination of premises P1 and P2 is crucial, since it necessitates firsthand experience for both the recollection of a past experience and the recollection of a prior experience, while not requiring firsthand experience for the recollection of a subsequent event.

Dinn\_ aga's thesis provides valuable insights into Locke's examination of the intricate relationship among memory, identity, and self-intimacy, therefore making it a suitable starting point for further exploration. According to Locke, the third premise (P3) of Dinn\_ aga's argument is substantiated by compelling evidence pertaining to the characteristics of individual identities. I am interested in conducting study to determine the validity of this theory.

Furthermore, an individual's preoccupation with their own identity, memory, and sense of self.

Locke posits that self-intimation, memory, and one's concept of self are intricately interconnected. According to the author's theory, the key determinant of a person's stability throughout time and their ability to possess self-awareness is in their capacity to recollect and effectively utilize their past conscious experiences.

The term "person" refers to entities that possess the capacity for cognition and self-awareness, which encompasses both individuals and substances. The act of perceiving another individual's ideas, whether in real-time or retrospectively, does not alter the fundamental nature of the cognitive being engaged in the process of knowing. The connection between myself and the person who embarked on a train earlier today is established by the remembrance of particular historical



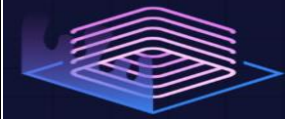
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occurrences, such as the contemplation of whether to consume coffee at present or postpone until arrival at the station. According to the philosophical perspective of Locke, the attribute of self-intimation or consciousness serves as the defining characteristic of an individual's personality, whereas co-consciousness is indicative of the continuous personal identity of said individual. Consequently, S1 is equivalent to S2. If subject 1 undergoes a particular experience, subject 2 will thereafter possess the ability to recollect a similar occurrence happening to them at a later time.

Locke's argument induces a transformation within my being, as it renders me incapable of asserting possession over past events that have faded from memory.

Locke's theory of identity encompasses the core concept of memory, denoted as P3\*: The individual retains recollection of all past experiences. This phenomenon can be attributed to its status as a fundamental attribute of the human identity, serving as evidence that the individual who underwent those events is same to the individual currently experiencing the present moment.

Can Locke's concept of personal identification provide support for Dinn\_aga's thesis on self-intimation? There exists a compelling rationale for the infeasibility of undertaking this task within the current circumstances. The reason for this can be attributed to Locke's assumption of the self-intimation thesis, which, according to his perspective, establishes the essence of an individual. Locke's conceptualization of individual identity exhibits a cyclical nature, rendering it unsuitable for direct application.

The utilization of the concepts of continuity and unique identity can potentially enhance the persuasiveness of Dinn\_aga's third premise, which constitutes a significant aspect of his argument. Is it possible to establish a personal identification norm that, rather than relying on the self-intimation thesis, is centered on recollection, similar to Locke's perspective?





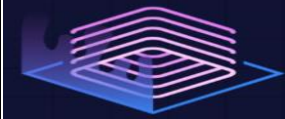
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