Yogācāra Buddhism
& Cognitive Science:
Constructing and
Deconstructing
Duality

HKU
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Presented by Professor William Waldron at the Centre of Buddhist Studies, University of Hong Kong, on January 16, 2015.

Overcoming Unconscious Imputation of Agency and Essence

- **Early Buddhism on cognitive processes, esp. *vijñāna* 識**
- **Cognitive Science on imputation of Self and Essence**
- **Yogācāra Buddhism 瑜伽宗；唯識宗；法相宗**
- **Cognitive unconscious 藏識 *ālayavijñāna***
- **Predispositions 習氣 *vāsanā* toward Agents & Essences**
- **Seeing Representation only 唯識: ontological foundation or epistemolgical corrective?**

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Three Marks of Existence
(*trilakṣaṇa*)

- **Impermanence**

- **Selflessness**

- **Suffering, dissatisfactoriness**

Three Marks of Existence
(*trilakṣaṇa*)

- **Impermanence**   **= life is a process**

- **Selflessness**   **= of interactive relations**

- **Suffering, dissatisfactoriness**

                    = that we live, experience

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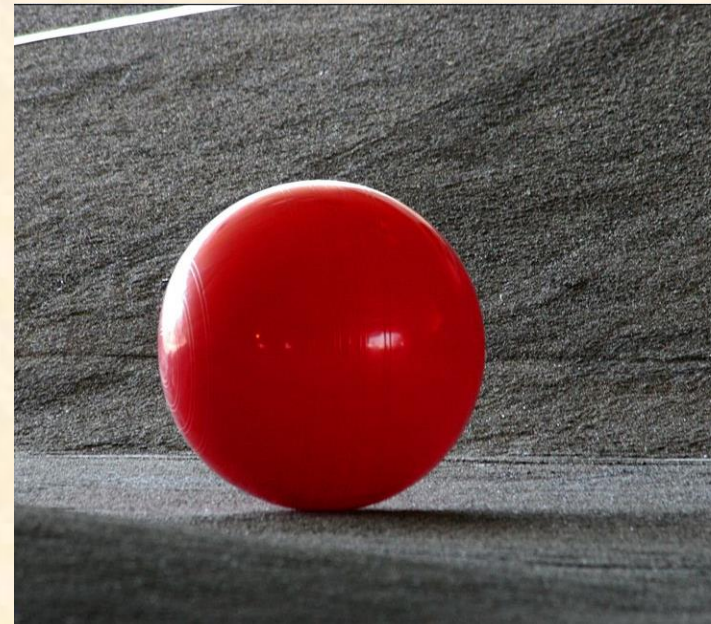# The Impersonal Causal Model: 'Dependent Arising' 縁起

**When this is,
that comes to be;
with the arising of this,
that arises**

**When this is not,
that does not come to be;
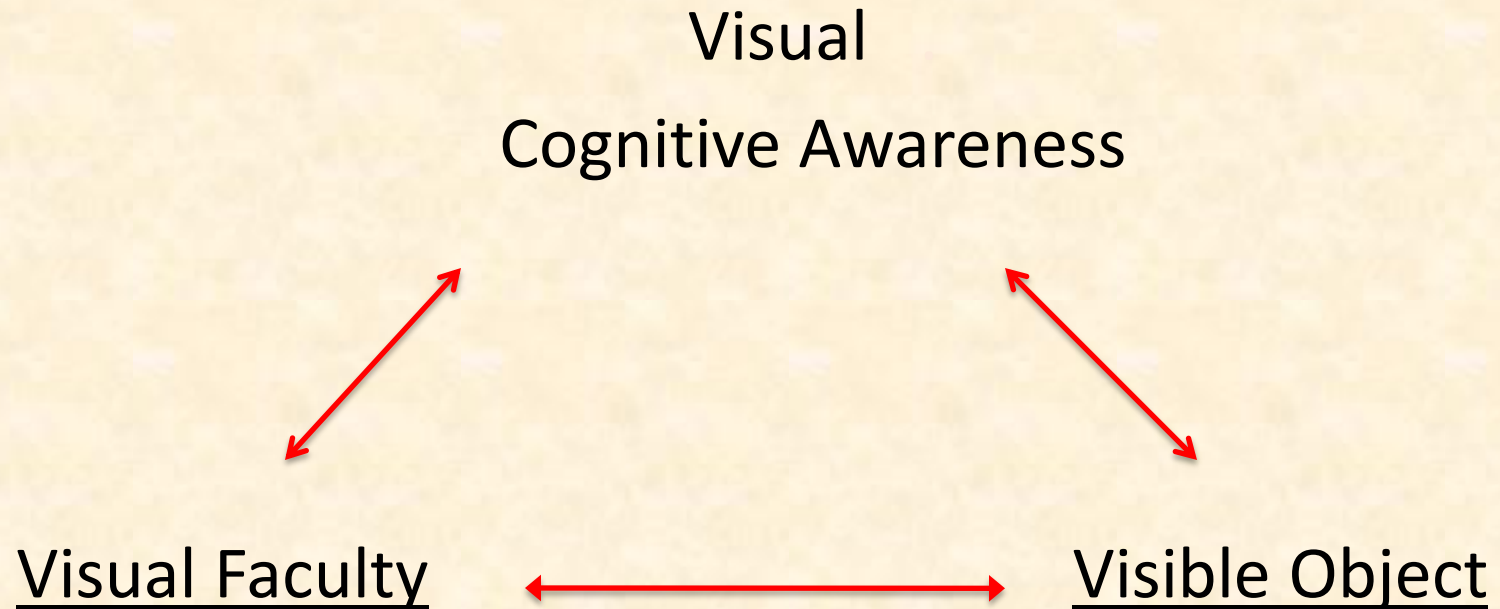with the cessation of this,
that ceases.**

The Dependent Arising of Cognitive Awareness

Visual (etc.) cognitive awareness (*vijñāna* 識)

arises when a *visible* object

impinges on an unimpaired visual faculty

and there is attention thereto.

Cognition as Interdependent Process

Visual

Cognitive Awareness

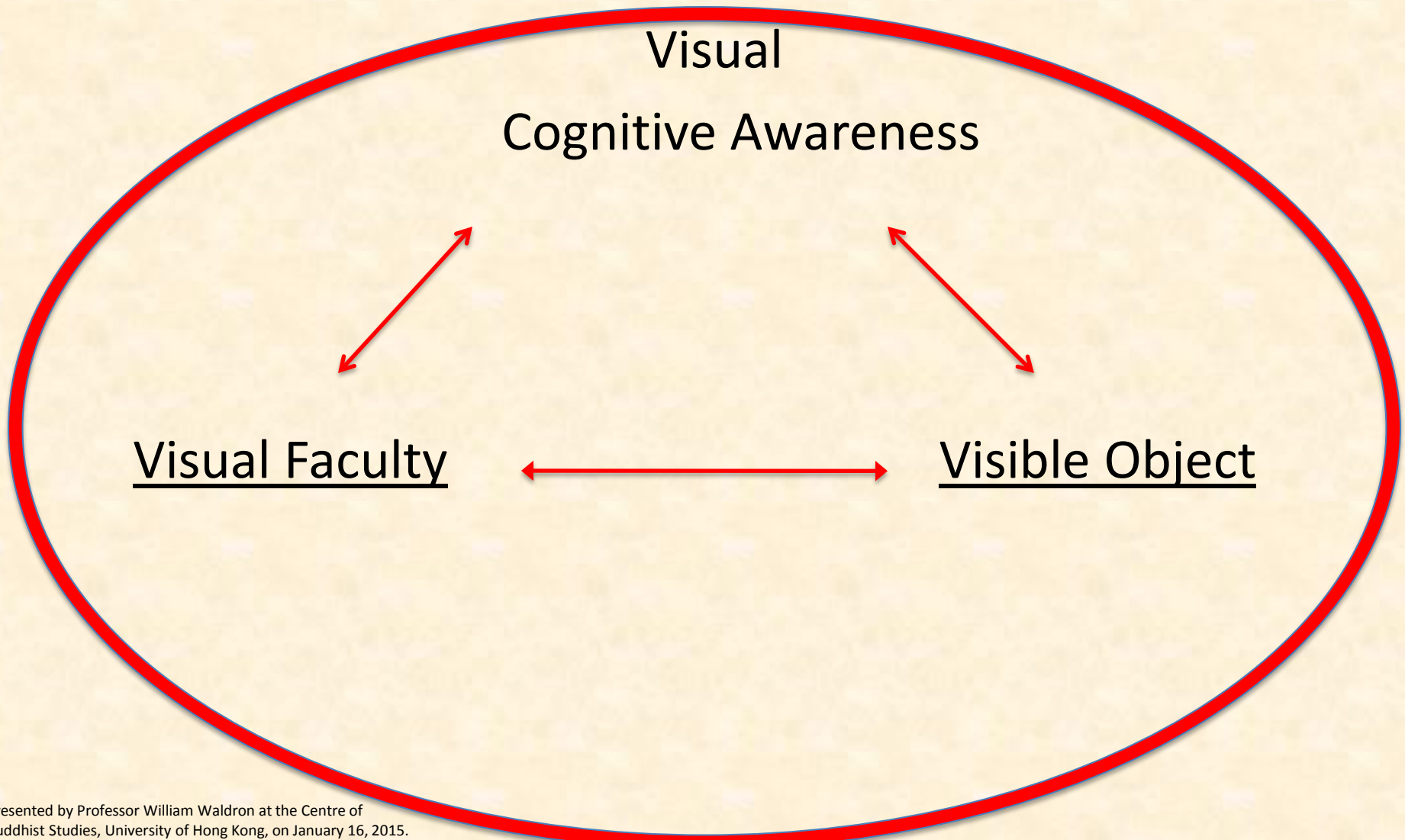
Visual Faculty

Visible Object

Cognition as a singular <u>event</u>

Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises.
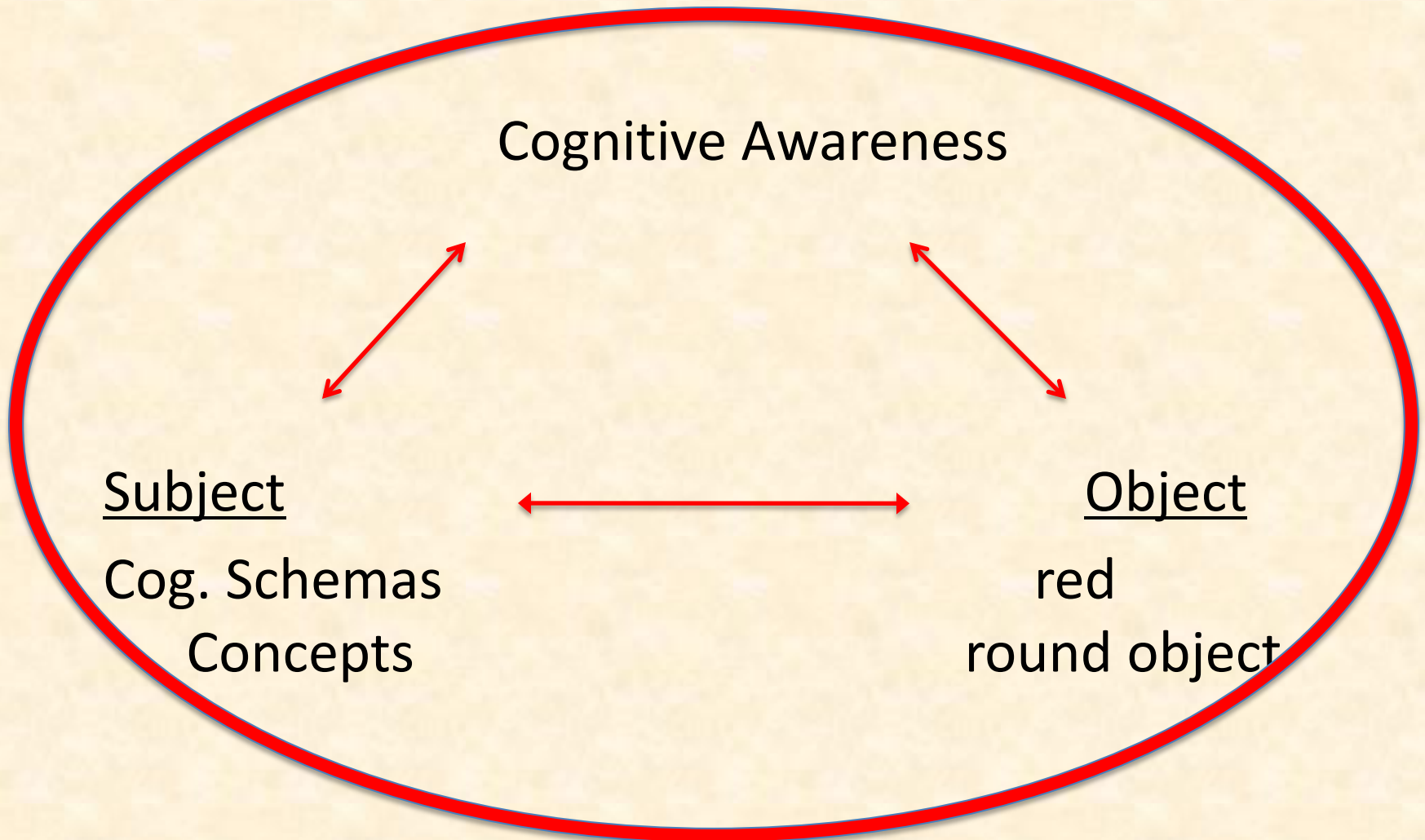
The meeting of the three is <u>contact</u>.

With contact as condition there is feeling…..

Cognition as Interdependent Process/Event

Visual

Cognitive Awareness

Visual Faculty   Visible Object

Cognition 'see a red ball' as Interdependent Process/Event

Cognitive Awareness

Subject

Cog. Schemas
Concepts

Object

red
round object

What can we know outside this Interdependent Process/Event?

?

?

Visual

Cognitive Awareness

Visual Faculty

Visible Object

?

?
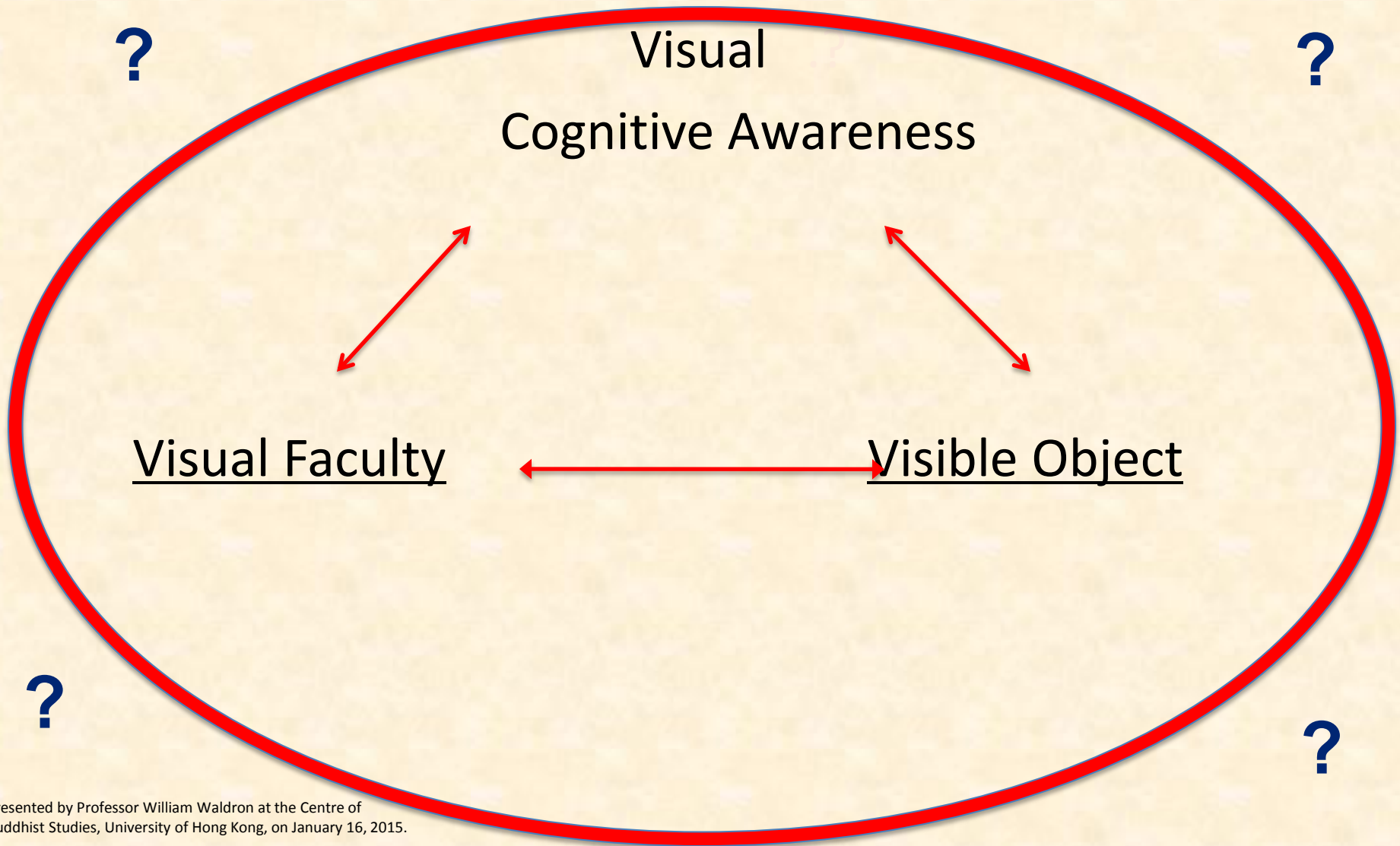
What's beyond the boundaries of our perceptions/ conceptions?

The Arising of the 'World' 器世

"It is in this fathom-long body with its perceptions and thoughts that there is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world."

(A II 48; S I 62)

The Arising of the 'World' 器世

"It is in this fathom-long body with its perceptions and thoughts that there is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world."

(A II 48; S I 62)

Arising of Cognitive Awareness
(*vijñāna*)

- **not** a faculty, but a result of conditions

- an <u>event</u> that depends on proper stimuli

- 'proper' stimuli determined by sense faculties

- "world" <u>correlative</u> to structure of faculties

- is neither subjective nor objective

Color Cognition as Interdependent Process/Event

Awareness of Color

Faculty
Retina, color cones
Neural circuitry
Color Concepts

Object
Reflective
Property of
Objects
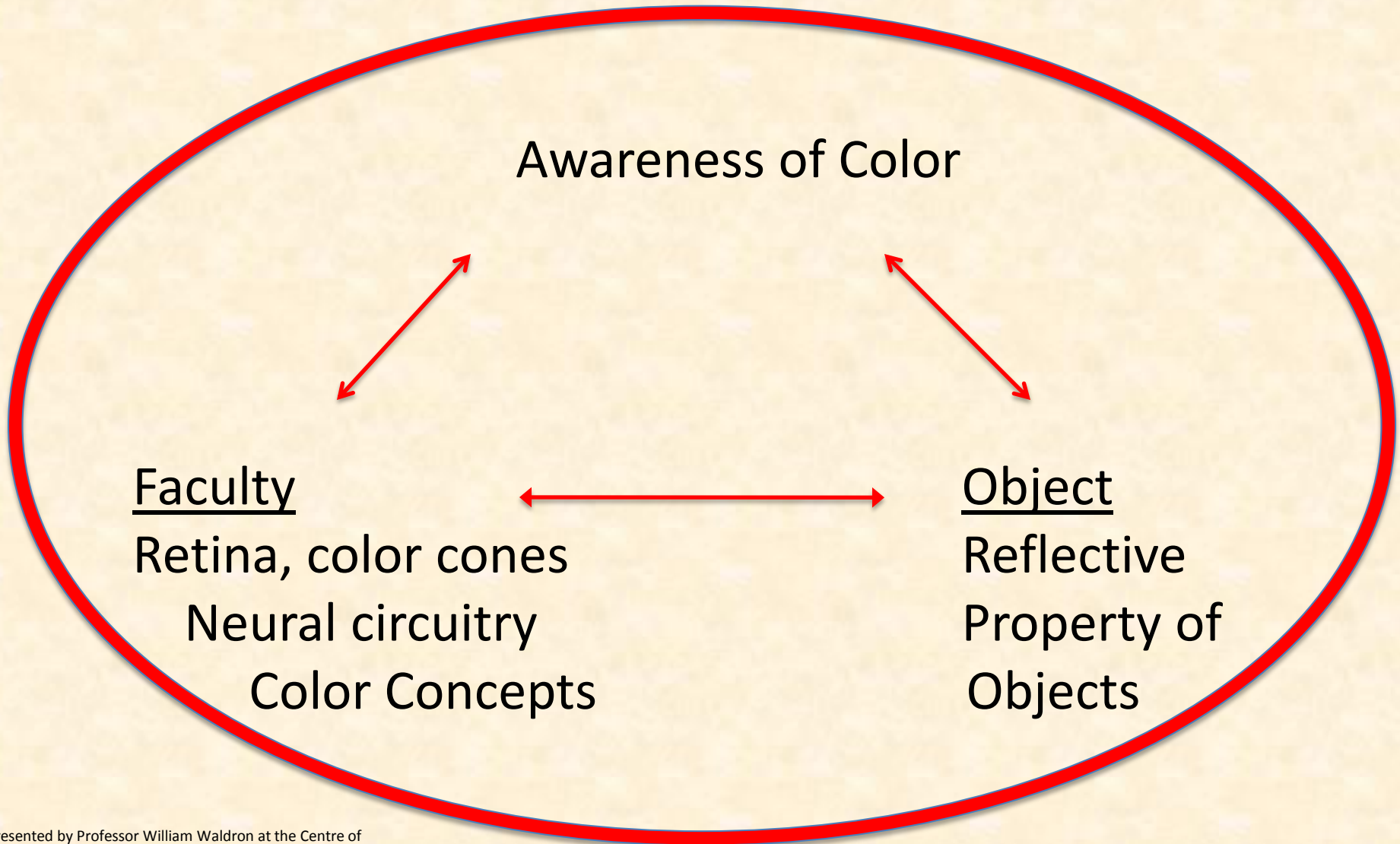
Where is Color Consciousness?

- **"arises from the interactions of our brains, the reflective properties of objects, and electromagnetic radiation.**

- **Colors are not objective... independent of retinas, color cones, neural circuitry, etc.**

- **Nor are colors purely subjective .....**
        neither a figment of our imaginations
        nor spontaneous creations…

- **it is function of the world and our biology interacting"**
(Lakoff and Johnson 1999, 24-5)

Arising of Mental Consciousness 1
(*mano-vijñāna* 意識)

Mental consciousness arises dependent upon mind and previous sense consciousness.

Visual consciousness is aware of blue, but mental consciousness is aware that it is blue.

# Arising of Mental Consciousness 2
(*mano-vijñāna* 意識)

**Mental consciousness arises
dependent upon mind and
mental phenomena (*dharma* 法).**

**Ex: thoughts, reflections, forms of speech
(P. *vitakka-vicārā vacīsankhārā*) 尋伺 言行**

Cognition: 'see a red ball'
as Interdependent Constructive Process

Visual

Cognitive Awareness

Faculty

Cog. Schemas
Concepts

Object/Percept

red round
object
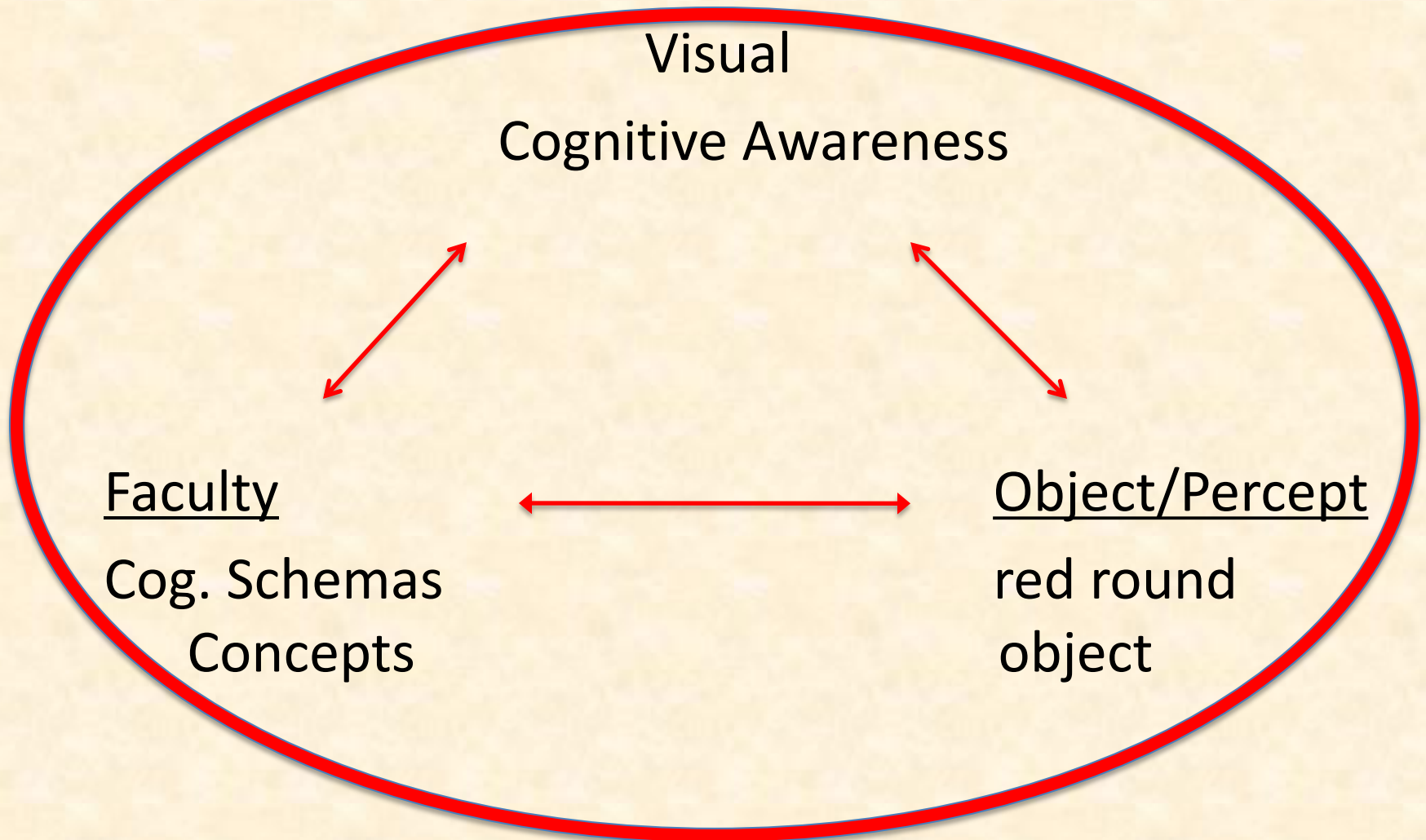
Mental Cognition: 'I see a red ball' as Interdependent Process

Mental

Cognitive Awareness

Faculty

Cog. Schemas

Concept 'I'

Object/Percept
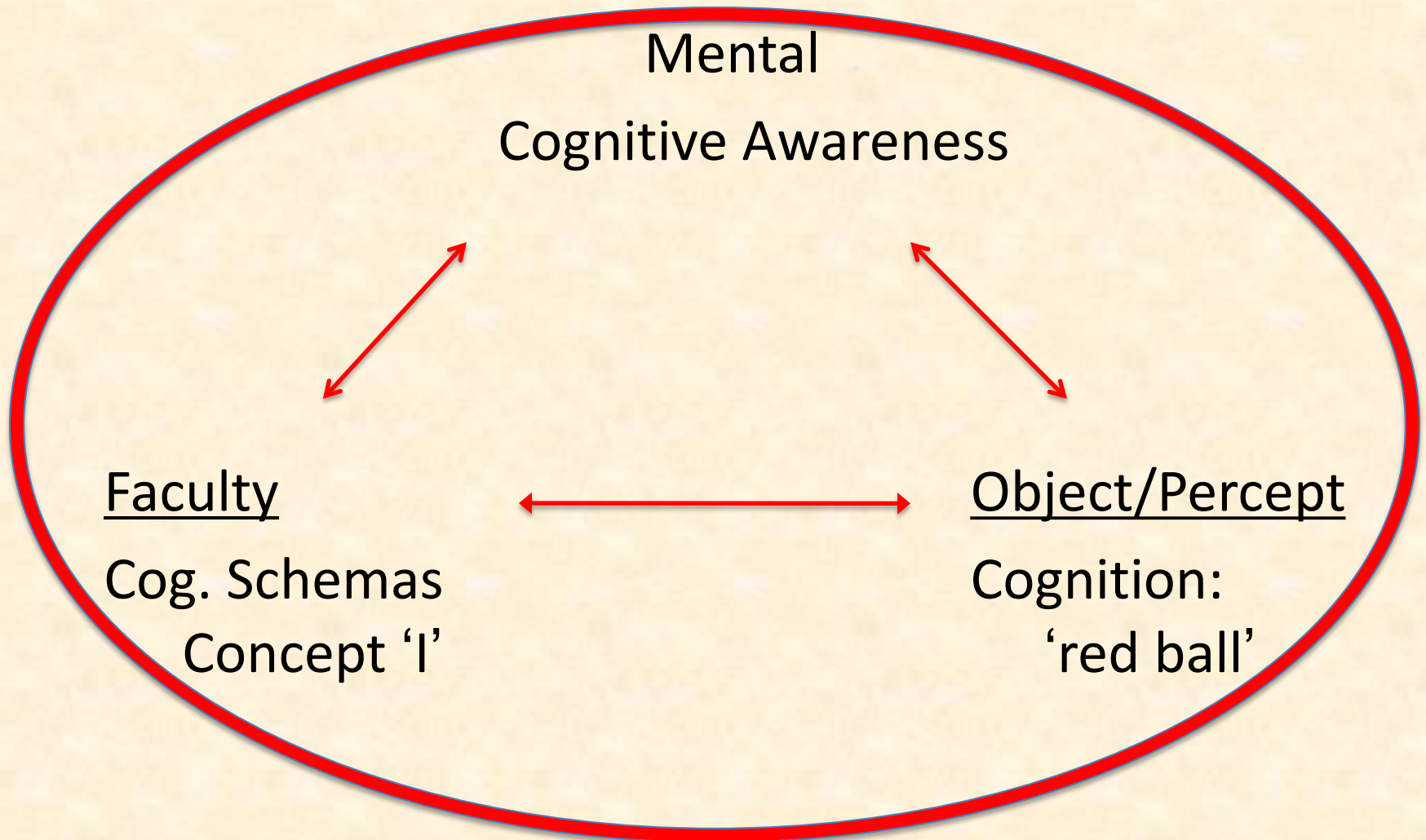
Cognition:

'red ball'

Typical Buddhist Analysis

'I see red ball' analyzed into various conditions:

– **'something' <u>impinges</u> on unimpaired visual organ,**

– **instigating <u>sensory cognitive schemas</u> that respond to wavelengths corresponding to 'red,'**

– *and* <u>conceptual cog. schemas</u> **related to 'ball,'**

– *and* **<u>linguistic cognitive schemas</u> regarding 'I'.**

Finally, awareness 'I see red ball' occurs.

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Ex.: 'I see a red ball'

In this interdependent cognitive process/event, neither:

the **subject** of seeing,

the **process** of seeing,

the **redness** of the ball,

nor the **ball** as object

—occur independently.
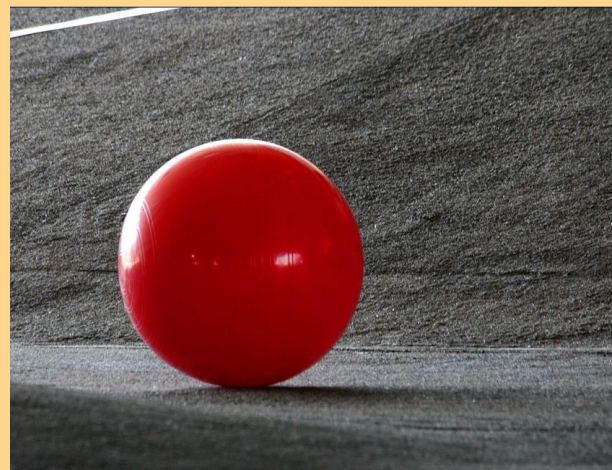
They constitute a system, a <u>pattern</u> of interaction,

"<u>a function of the world and our biology interacting</u>"

'I am' as Conceptual Proliferation
(*asmīti; prapañca* 戲論)

'I am' is a proliferation

'I am this' is a proliferation

'I shall be' is a proliferation

'I am' is the root of proliferation

From sensation to awareness to endless proliferation

- **Dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is <u>contact</u>. With contact as condition there is feeling.**

- **What one feels, that one perceives. What one perceives, that one thinks about. What one thinks about, that one mentally proliferates.**

- **With what one has mentally proliferated as the <u>source</u>, one is <u>plagued</u> by further perceptions and notions tinged by mental proliferation [*papañca-saññā-sankhā*] in regards to past, future, and present forms visible through the eye .... mind-objects conceivable through the mind. (M 203)**

a path is made by walking it

Chuang Tzu

道
行
之
而
成

results
cognitive awareness
feelings, pleasant, etc.
reinforce dispositions

karmic actions
grasping, repelling
etc.

afflictive response
craving, aversion
ignorance

results
pleasant feeling
painful feeling
neutral feeling

karmic actions
grasping
repelling

afflictive response
craving
aversion
ignorance

results
five aggregates:
form, feeling, perception,
Intention, consciousness

karmic actions
grasping
repelling

afflictive response
Ignorance: view of self
tendency to conceit 'I am'

World Arises by Afflicted Action

And what, monks, is the origin of the world?
In dependence on the eye and forms, **visual-consciousness** arises. The meeting of the three is **contact**. With contact as condition, **feeling** [comes to be]…**craving**…. **grasping**…… **becoming**…. **birth**; with birth as condition, **aging**-and-**death**, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. This, monks, is the **origin of the world**. (S II 73)

The **world** (*loka*) in its variety arises from **action** (*karma*)…

It is due to the power of the **afflictive dispositions** that actions accumulate.   (AKBh ad V 1)

Elimination of Self-view

How should one know ands see so that, in regard to this body with consciousness and in regard to all external signs, <u>I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit</u> no longer occur within?

With what manner of insight, and not grasping anything in this world, does a monk realize Nibbāna? Let him completely cut off the root of concepts tinged with the <u>prolific tendency </u>(papañca), namely, the thought "I am" (SN 915-16)

WHAT'S THE NATURE OF MIND OF SELF?

HOW CAN WE KNOW?

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Buddhism and Cognitive Science

Why should we bring Buddhism
into dialogue with cognitive science?

- **Both scientists and Buddhists are asking <u>how</u> <u>things</u> <u>come to be</u> not <u>what they are</u>;**
  - **they seek causes, not essences, of things**
- **Ex. scientists seek causes of disease to prevent its occurrence and reduce suffering**
- **Buddha: "Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation"**

Centrality of Causality
No Essential Self

- **They are both concerned with a <u>causal</u> explanation of experience.**

- **They both posit that that there is <u>no unitary</u>, unchanging <u>entity</u> called 'self'**

- **They both seek to understand <u>why</u>, even so, we <u>imagine</u> we have or are such a 'self'**

Why Emphasize Causal Patterns?

To see and act as if we were unchanging, <u>in</u>dependent unitary <u>entities</u> acting on equally unchanging, independent 'things' *is to prevent us from understanding causality.*

And this prevents us from understanding and removing the causes of suffering.

This is <u>*moral*</u> dimension to Buddhist analyses.

***Depersonalizing* experience abets understanding.**

Problem: No Unchanging Self

"The very way that we normally conceptualize our inner lives… [that] there is always a <u>Subject</u> that is the locus of <u>reason</u> and that metaphorically has <u>an existence independent of the body</u>… <u>contradicts</u> the fundamental findings of cognitive science."

(Lakoff and Johnson,1999, 268)

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Scientific Question:
Why do we Imagine we are a Self?

- "We each believe that we possess an Ego, Self or Final Center of Control... We're <u>virtually forced</u> to maintain that belief, even though we know it's <u>false</u>" (Minsky,1986 306)

- "This is the <u>puzzle brain scientists want to solve</u>... the <u>gap</u> between our understanding of the brain and the sensation of our conscious lives." (Gazzaniga,1998, 172)

Construction of Self and Object

- **"I began seeing consciousness in terms of <u>two players, the organism and the object</u>, …. the biology of consciousness became a matter of discovering <u>how the brain can construct</u> neural patterns that map each of the <u>two players</u>."**

- **(1) the feeling essence of our sense of self;… (2) the enhancement of the image of the causative object… <u>the object is *set out*… It becomes *fact*</u>."**

(Damasio 2000 *Feeling What Happens* 133; 171)

Cartesian Theater:

We imagine we are sitting inside our heads/mind,

like a little man, (homunculus), watching the movie out there.

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We imagine we are sitting inside our heads/mind,

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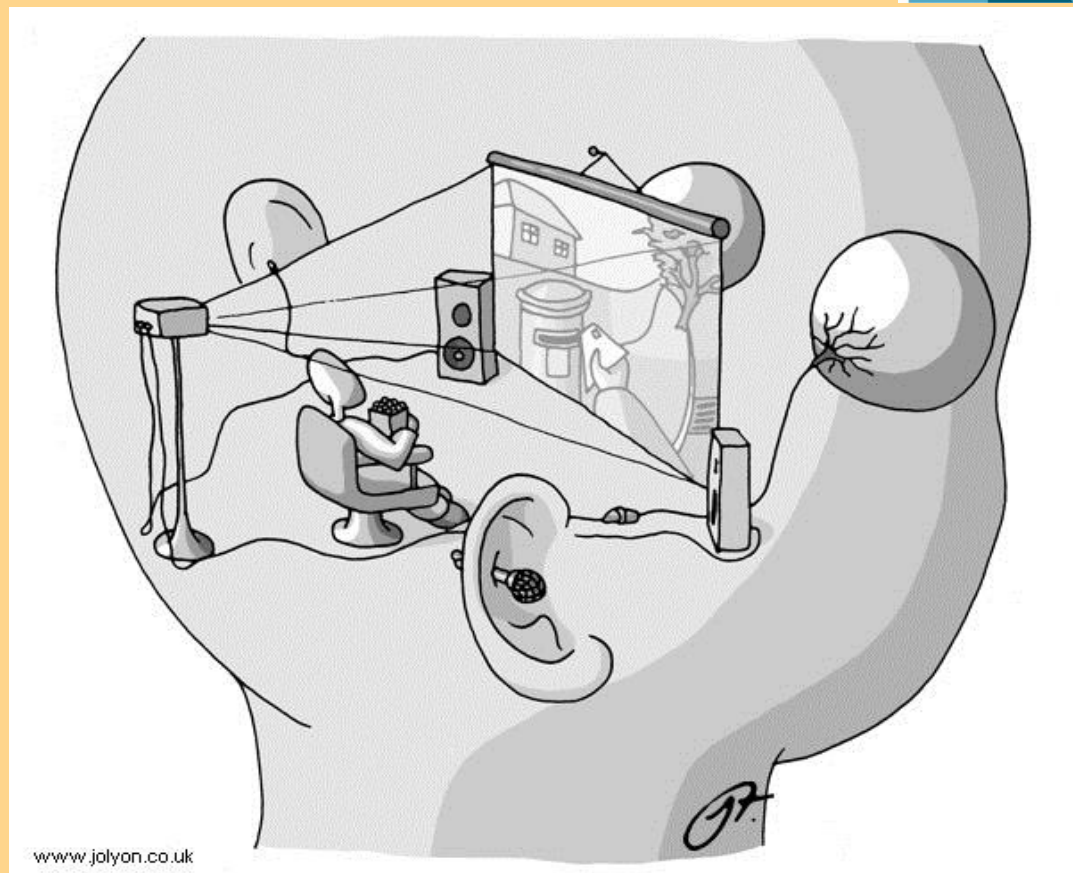
Yogācāra: we see the world as a duality of   grasper (*grāhaka*) and grasped (*grāhya*), subject and object

Non-reflective automatic thinking: agents and objects have essences

- We imagine "the part that makes you *you* and me *me* ─ the essence."

- We "infer each species has an underlying causal <u>nature</u>, or *<u>essence</u>.*"

- "<u>children are born believing in essences</u>; not something they are taught."

- "we are <u>dualists</u> because our brain processes have been selected over time <u>to organize the world in specific categories</u> and assign different <u>properties</u> to these categories."

- "our brain <u>automatically… names and categorizes</u> all sorts of objects…" <u>an object [&] agent</u> detection."

Gazzinga, *Human,* **274, 250,249**

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Innate dualists, realists, essentialists

- "we are <u>natural Cartesians</u>—<u>dualistic</u> thinking comes naturally to us. We have two distinct ways of seeing the world: as containing bodies and as containing souls.", xii

- "And from this follow…the concepts of self, identity, and life after death." 191

- "Our intuitive dualism grounds our understanding of personal identity. We recognize that a person's body will age… but in an important sense, the person remains the same." 195 <u>Substance – attribute metaphysics</u>

- "Children are dualists in the same way that they are <u>essentialists</u>, <u>realists</u>, and <u>moralists</u>. They are dualists in the sense that they naturally see the world as containing <u>two distinct domains</u>, what Wellman calls 'physical object and real event' and 'mental states and entities'—what I have described as bodies and souls." 199 Bloom, *Decartes' Babies*

Extrapolate from <u>rubber hand illusion</u> to phenomenal self model (PSM): it arises from "the <u>conscious model of the organism as a whole</u> that is activated by the brain…a full-body analogue to the rubber-hand illusion"

4
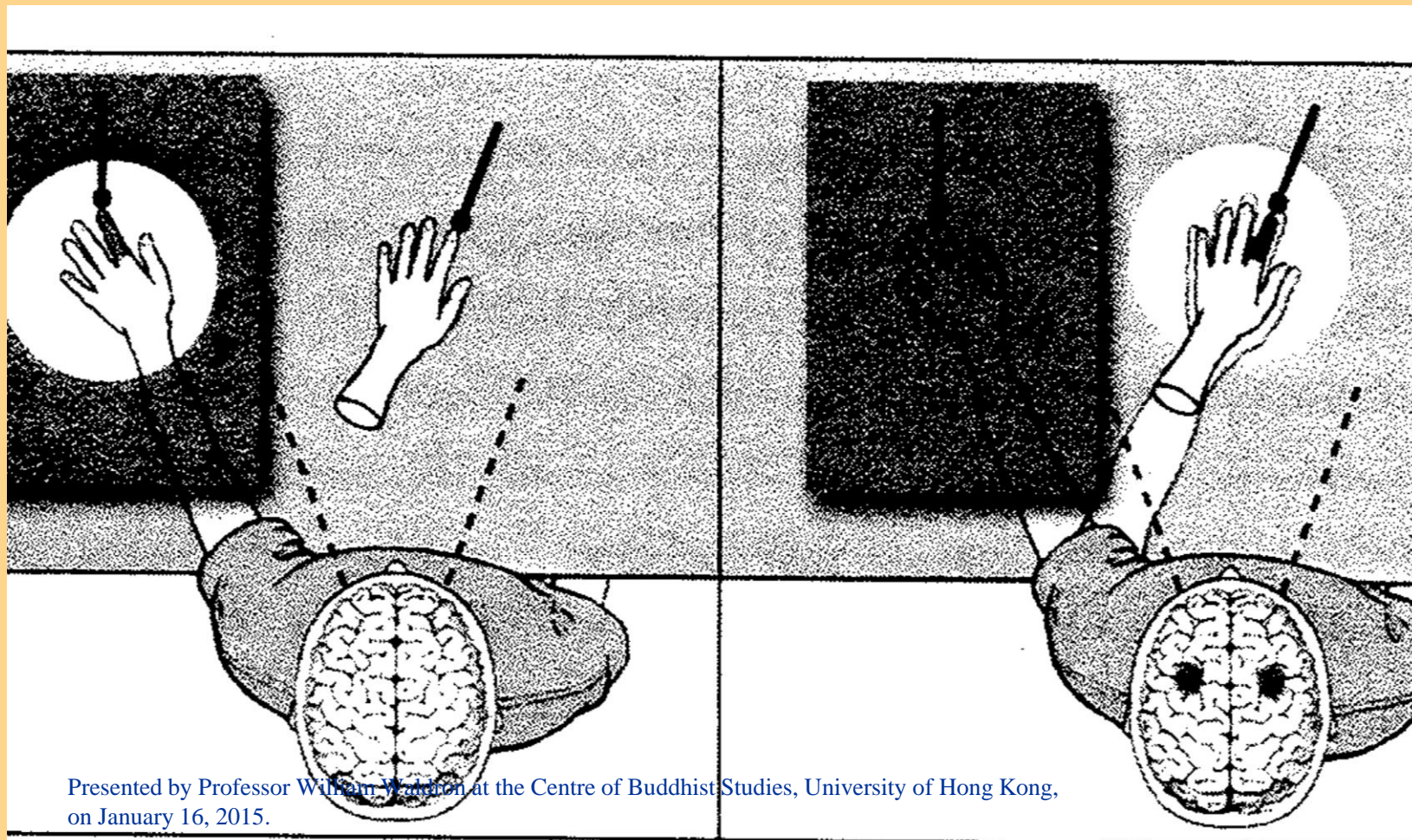
Sense of self depends on our innate <u>inability</u> to see ourselves

"we <u>are unable</u> to experience and introspectively <u>recognize our self-models *as* models</u>"

"the conscious experience of being a self emerges because a large part of the PSM is transparent."

"we are <u>unaware of the medium </u>through which information reaches us…   We do not see neurons firing in our brain but <u>only what they represent for us</u>."

Metzinger, *Ego Tunnel,* 7

Analysis is counter-intuitive and hard!

- **"nonreflective beliefs are the default mode." 272**

- **"reflective beliefs… are not fast and automatic but are conscious and take time to form." Gazzaniga 271**

- **"To separate the verifiable from the non-verifiable is a *conscious*, tedious process that most people are unwilling or unable to do. It takes energy and perseverance and training. It can be counter-intuitive. It is called analytical thinking. It is not common and is difficult to do… it is what science is about." 273f**

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Three Cognitive Modes

Problem: we **impute** essences onto constructed processes

Subject *essentially* separate from Object

Ex. Cartesian Theatre: Body-Mind duality (*dvaya*)

How?: Essences projected from unconscious dispositions

Ex. Cognitive Psychology: Bloom, Gazzaniga

Solution: Learn to see *through* our Cognitive Constructs

Metzinger: *The Ego Tunnel: Myth of the Self*

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Old Wine, New Bottles?

"Psychologists agree that the brain contains processes, biases, and knowledge structures that underlie how we perceive and act in the world…

In an <u>earlier</u> time, these… would be called <u>habits</u> of the mind or <u>faculties</u> or <u>instincts</u>; now they are sometimes called <u>modules</u> or mental organs.

Paul Bloom (31f)

Yogācāra School 4-5th c. CE 'Practitioners of yoga'

- 2nd **main school of Mahāyāna, after Madhyamaka, philosophy of emptiness (*śūnyatā* 空)**

- **developed by Asanga and Vasubandhu**

- **Three Cognitive Modes (*trisvabhāva*)**

- **Uncon. Constructive Processes (*ālaya-vijñāna* 藏識)**

- **Representation Only (*vijñapti-mātra* 唯識)**

Three Natures (*tri-svabhāva*)

1. Agents and objects falsely appear as independent entities (*parikalpita-svabhāva*)

2. These false appearances arise in dependence on (*paratantra-svabhāva*) <u>specific cognitive processes</u>

3. When one sees them as they 'truly are' (*pariniṣpanna-svabhāva*), then one is freed from bondage to mere appearances.

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Limitations of Analysis
based conscious awareness

Six forms of cognitive awareness <u>by themselves</u> cannot account for the following traditionally accepted facts:

- **Co-presence of contradictory potentialities**

- **continuity of:**

    - **- accumulated karmic potential (*karma-upacaya*)**

    - **- of afflictive latent dispositions (*anuśaya*)**

    - **- attainments along path over multiple lifetimes**

- **growth and function of underlying cognitive schemas**

- **simultaneous multi-sensory experience**

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Ālaya-vijñāna   蔵識

གུན་གཞི་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ

- *Ālaya,* **nominal form composed of**

  prefix *ā*, **"near to, towards"**

  verbal root *lī*, **"to cling or press closely, stick or adhere to, to lie, recline, alight or settle upon, hide or cower down in, disappear, vanish."**   **(SED 903; PED 109)**

- **Meanings: "house, dwelling, receptacle, storage; clinging."**

  阿賴耶識   *a-ra-ya-vijñāna*

  蔵識   **Repository, store consciousness/cognition**

  གུན་ *kun* = **all**   གཞི་ *gzhi* = **basis, support**

  རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ *rnam par shes pa*   = *vijnāna*, **cognitive awareness**

Ālaya-vijñāna arises with '<u>inner</u>' and '<u>outer</u>' supports

(1.b) Briefly, ālaya-vijñāna arises by means of a twofold support:

(1) By the perception of the inner appropriation (*_adhyātmam upādāna-vijñapti_); and

(2) By the outward perception of the shared world whose aspects are not clearly delineated (*_bahirdhā-apariccinnākāra-bhājana-vijñapti_)

[Yogācāra-bhūmi. D. 3b7–4a3; H. 580a2–12; P. 1019a29–b7]

<u>Inner Support</u>: Ālaya Awareness Arises by Cognitive Schemas and Language

The mind with all the seeds matures, congeals, grows, develops, and increases
<u>dependent upon</u> the two-fold substratum (*upādāna;受）:

(1) the material sense-faculties along with their supports
      (*sādhiṣṭhāna-rūpīndriya-upādāna;有色諸根及所依執受)

(2) the predispositions for conceptual proliferation in terms of conventional usage of images, names, and concepts

  (*nimitta-nāma-vikalpa-vyavahāra-prapañca-vāsanā-upādāna;相名分別言說戲論習氣執受） (*Samdhinirmocana Sutra* V. 2解深密經)

Ālaya-v. arises connected with with <u>subliminal</u> mental factors

- (2.b)A. "*Ālaya-vijñāna* [arises] being connected with the five omnipresent factors associated with mind (*citta-saṃprayukta-sarvatraga* 心相應遍行因):

- attention (*manaskāra* 作意), sense-impression (*sparśa* 觸), feeling (受 *vedanā*), apperception (想 *saṃjñā*), and intention (思 *cetanā*).

- (2.b)B. <u>These dharmas…. are subtle (*sūkṣma*) because they are hard to perceive</u>."

    [D. 4b2–7; H. 580a29–b8; P. 1019616–22]

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'Outer' object is Continuous, Subtle Cognition of Shared World

(1.b)A.2. The "outward perception of the shared world, whose aspects are undiscerned" means:

the continuous, uninterrupted perception of the continuity of the shared world <u>based upon</u> that very *ālaya-vijñāna* which has inner appropriation as a support.

(1.b)B.1. The objective support [of ālaya-vijñāna] is <u>subtle</u> (*sūkṣma*) because it is <u>difficult to discern</u> (*dusparicccheda*) even by worldly sages.

'Inner conditions' influence the form of 'external' objects

(1.b)A.3. "One should know that the way *ālaya-vijñāna* [arises] in regard to the support of inner appropriation and to the object of the external world is similar to a burning flame which arises inwardly while it emits light outwardly on the basis of the wick and oil, respectively." i.e. sense faculties and impressions

[D. 3b7–4a3; H. 580a2–12;
P. 1019a29–b7]

Cognitive Process in Early Buddhism

Cognitive Awareness

appears as

Subject

Objects

Cog. Schemas

Concepts
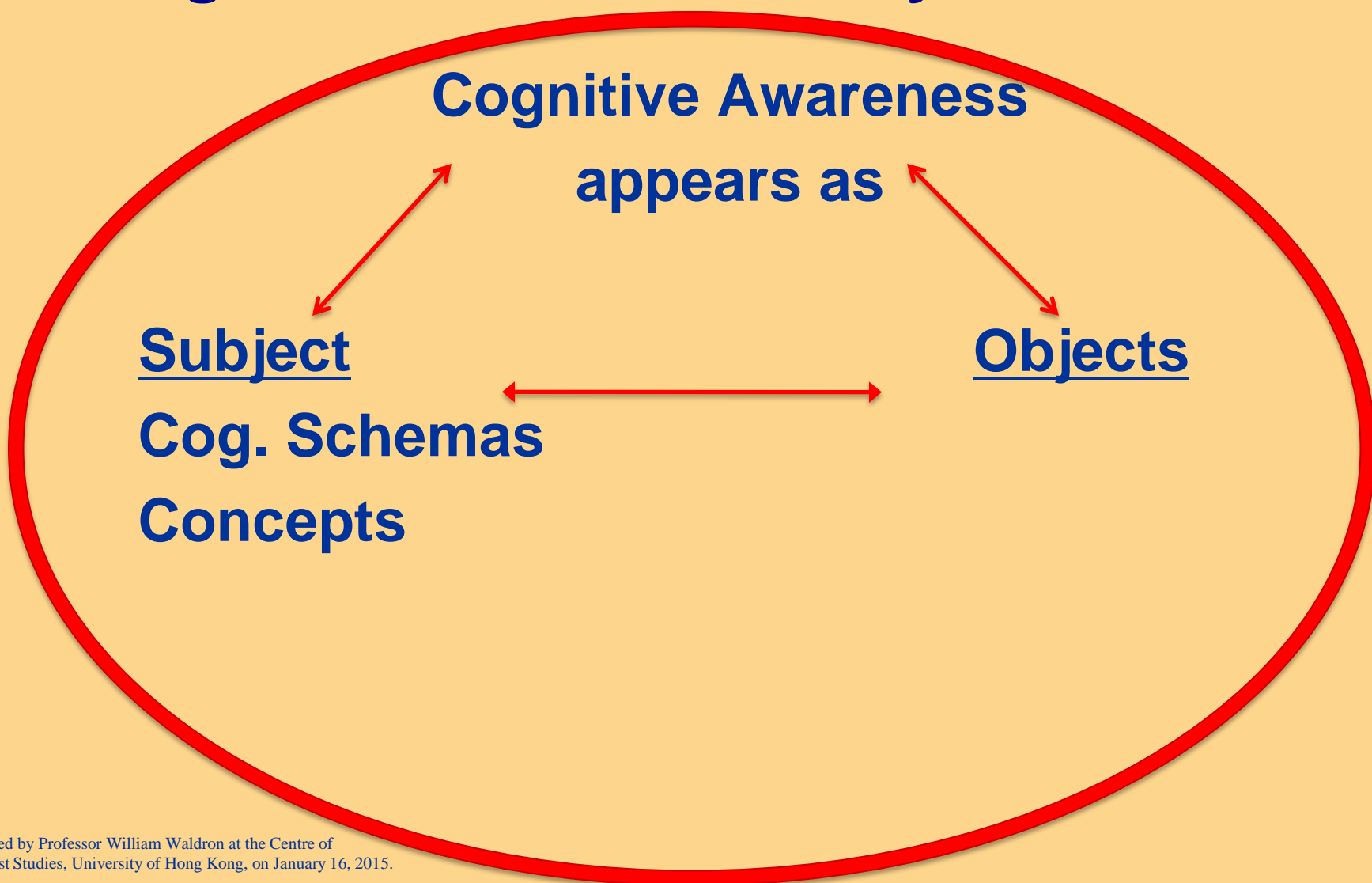
Cognitive Process in Yogācāra

Cognitive Awareness

appears as

Subject **Objects**

Visual Fac. *based on*

------------------subliminal awareness-----------

Subliminal 'World'
Cog. Schemas

Linguistic Predisp.

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Ālaya-vijñāna arises momentariliy & uninterruptedly

(1.b)B.2. "There are always objects [of *ālaya-vijñāna*], they are not sometimes this and sometimes that (*anyathātva*).

(1.b)B.3. It should be understood that *ālaya-vijñāna* is momentary regarding [its] objects, and though it *continuously* arises in a stream of instants, it is either singular (*ekatva*) <u>nor permanent (</u>非常 Ch. only)."

[D. 4a3–5; H. 580a12–18; P. 1019b7–10]

Arising of Subliminal Awareness, of Ālaya-vijñāna

- **Cognitive awareness is <u>experiential process</u> or event that <u>occurs</u> in a pattern of conditional relationships.**

- **Not <u>a faculty</u> that 'cognizes,' but a result that occurs (in Abhidharma, a resultant dharma, vipāka, རྣམ་པར་སྨིན་)**

- **Objects, 'worlds' (loka) correlative to cognitive faculties: 'unclear world' is determined by <u>embedded schemas</u>**

- **Unit of analysis is still an experiential, relational process**

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What is a seed 種子?

Metaphor for potentiality of karma

(3.b)A.1. "Of these, 'being a seed' means that whichever wholesome, unwholesome or indeterminate [forms of] arising *vijñāna* occur, they all have *ālaya-vijñāna* as [their] seed."

Seeds both result from and cause new plants:

> **Seeds result from past actions,**

> **are 'stored' in 'store-house *vijñāna* as potentiality and then' give rise' to results.**

It is a metaphor of karmic potentiality, not an object or entity.

Infusing impressions (*vāsanā*習氣), laying seeds (*bīja* 種子) into *ālaya-vijñāna*

(3.b)B. "The [forms of] arising *vijñāna* function as the condition of *ālaya-vijñāna* by "nurturing (*paripuṣṭi*) seeds in this life.....

"[This] means that insofar as [karmically] skillful, unskillful, and indeterminate [moments of] arising *vijñāna* arise, based on *ālaya-vijñāna*,

their simultaneous arising and ceasing…. infuses (*bhavayati*) impressions (*vāsanā*習氣) into *ālaya-vijñāna*."

[D4b7–5a7; H. 580b9–29; P. 1019b22–c6]

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As impressions, seeds
accumulate
ālaya awareness
"grows, develops,
increases"
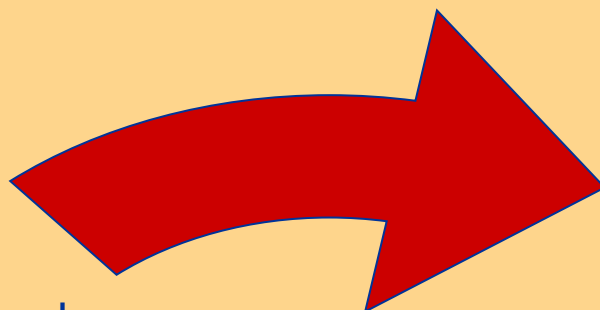
six consciousnesses
arise based
on *ālaya* awareness
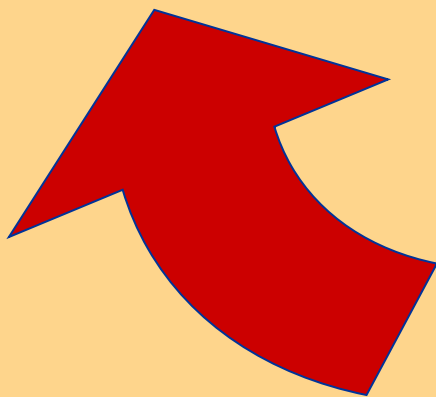
actions & experiences
'plant' seeds and
'infuse' impressions into
ālaya awareness
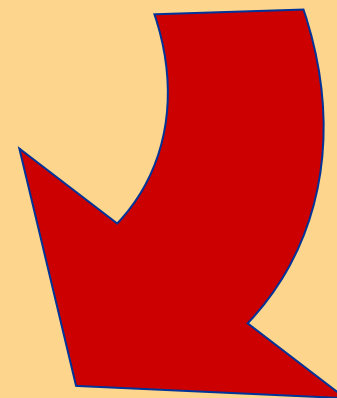
Cognition as Interdependent Process/Event
Yogācāra: Synchronic

Cognitive Awareness

Visual Faculty

'red ball'

based on

ālaya awareness

Cog. Schemas

(*vāsanā*)

Subliminal 'World'
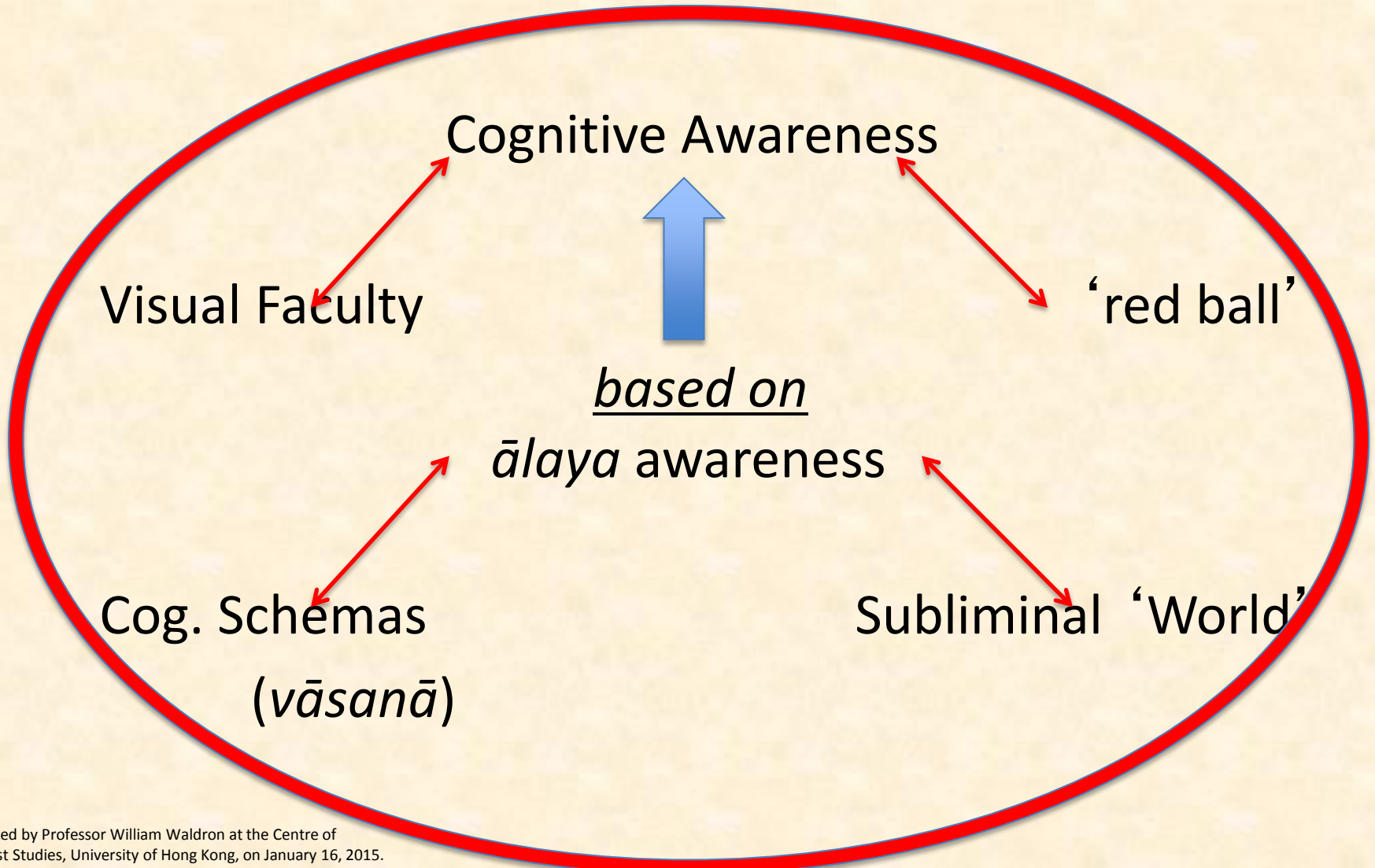
Cognition as Interdependent Process/Event
Yogācāra: <u>Diachronic</u>
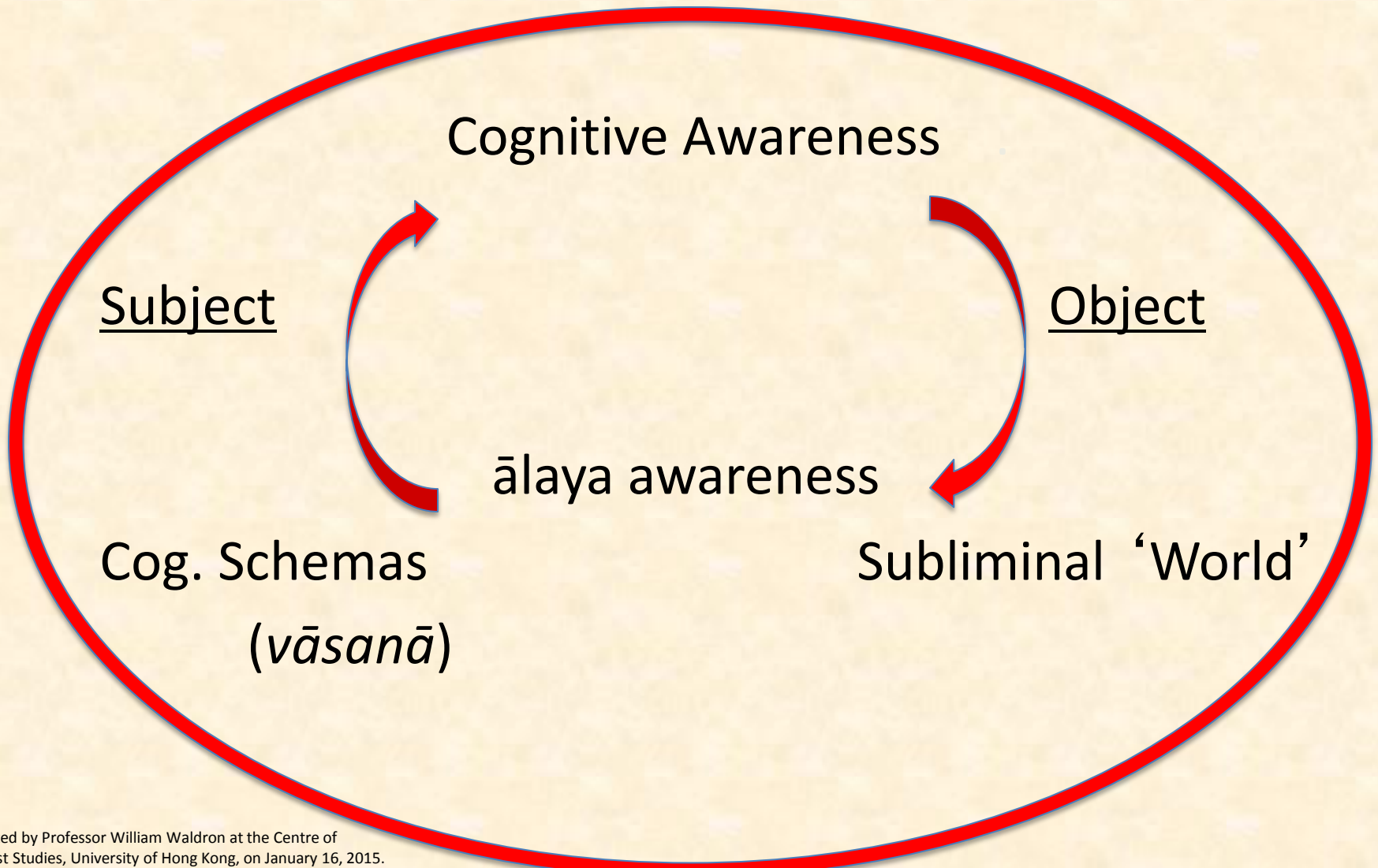
Cognitive Awareness

<u>Subject</u>

<u>Object</u>

ālaya awareness

Cog. Schemas

Subliminal 'World'

(*vāsanā*)

Cognitive skills, habits, develop through constant feedback process

(3.b)B.1. "**By that cause (hetu) and condition (pratyaya), by being skillful, etc.,**

[forms of] arising vijñāna also arise successively <u>well-nurtured, well-tempered, and quite distinct</u>."

Arising simultaneously with continuous latent afflictions

(4.b)B.4. "The [afflicted] mind ([*kliṣṭa* 染污]-*manas* 末那; 意) always arises and functions concurrently with *ālaya-vijñāna*.

One should know that until that [mind] is completely destroyed [it] is <u>always associated</u> with the four afflictions (*kleśa*), which by nature arise <u>innately</u> (*sahaja*) and concurrently:

>   a view of self-existence (*satkāya-dṛṣṭi* 身見),
>   the conceit "I am" (*asmimāna*),
>   self-love (*ātmasneha*), and
>   ignorance (*avidyā* 無明)."

[D. 6b5–7a1; H. 581a17–24; P. 1020a7–13]

Afflicted subliminal self-grasping
(*kliṣṭa-manas* 染污意)

"**Afflicted Mentation, which conceives**

'I-making' (*aham-kāra*) & the conceit 'I am'

always arises and functions <u>simultaneously</u> **with** *ālaya* **awareness …**

<u>**taking it as its object and conceiving it**</u>

as 'I am this' and 'this is I.' "

(*Yogācārabhūmi*)

Unconscious self-view continuously influences conscious cognitive processes

(4.b)A.2. "Mental cognition (*mano-vijñāna*) is said to be <u>based on</u> [affflicted] mind ([*kliṣṭa*]-manas),

because <u>as long as mind</u> (*manas*) <u>has not ceased</u> [mental-cognition] <u>is not freed from the bondage of perception</u> (*vijñapti;* 了別) toward phenomena (*nimitta;* 相);

but if [*manas*] has ceased, [it] will be freed."

[D. 5a7–b6; H. 580b29–c13; P. 1019c6–17]

Sense of 'I' as Interdependent Process

Cognitive Awareness

appears as

Subject   **Objects**

Visual Fac.

--------------subliminal sense of self-------------

Subliminal   **'World'**

Cog. Schemas

Ling. Predisp. "I"

Phen. Self Model
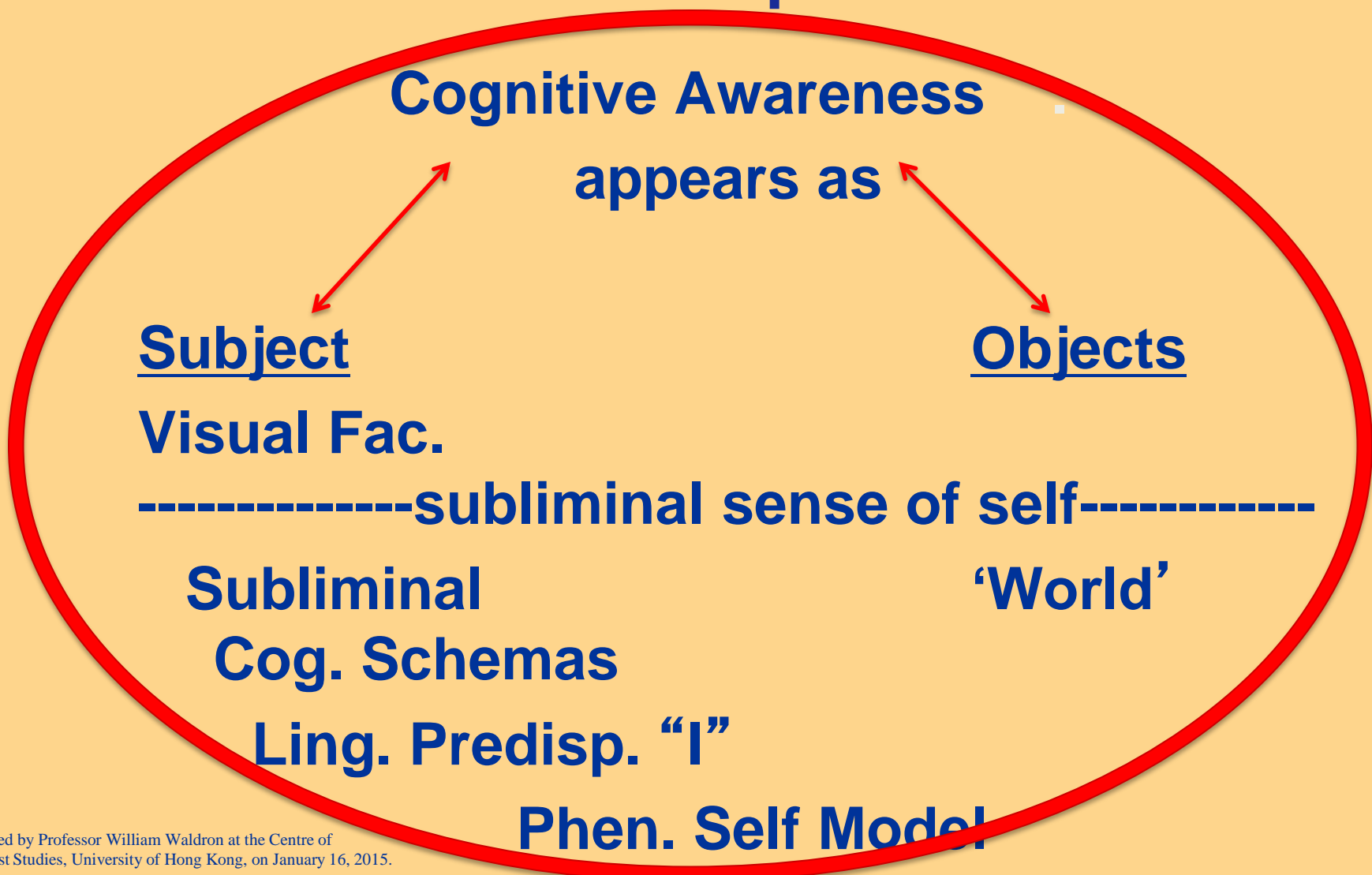
What is a 'world' (*loka* 世間) in Buddhism?

- "It is in this fathom-long body with its perceptions and thoughts that there <u>is</u> the world, the <u>origin</u> of the world, the <u>cessation</u> of the world, and the <u>path</u> leading to the cessation of the world." (A II 48; S I 62)

- AKBh ad V 1a: "world in its variety arises by action (karma)"
- *Bhājana*: sharing or participating in; a partaker of, a recipient, receptacle, (esp.) a vessel.
- *Bhājana-loka* 器世間: 'world' we share based on similar karma

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Two Subliminal 'Worlds': Individual and shared

"**The uncommon [aspect of *ālaya* awareness] is the seed of the <u>individual</u> sense-spheres.**

不共相者。謂各別內處種子

The common [aspect of *ālaya* awareness] is the seed of the <u>shared</u> world (*bhājana-loka*)."

共相者。謂器世間種子

(*Mahāyāna-samgraha* I. 60)

Shared World from Shared Concepts

"**Cognitive awareness arises in regard to <u>conventional
expressions</u> of selves, things and actions**

**due to the special power of the <u>impressions
of speech</u>**"(*abhilāpa-vāsanā*).

(MSg. I.58 commentary)

Shared World from Shared Karma

" 'The shared [aspect of *ālaya* awareness]' …
   is the <u>cause of perceptions</u> which appear as the
   <u>shared world</u>.

It is 'shared' because these perceptions <u>appear
   similarly</u> to all who experience them due to the
   effects of their own <u>similar karma</u>."
                    (MSg. I.60 commentary)

Individual 'Worlds'

Signs/images (*vijñapti*).

appear as

Subject   **Objects**

Visual Fac.

-----------subliminal sense of self----------

Subliminal   **'World'**

    Cog. Schemas

    Ling. Predisp.

Individual *and* Intersubjective 'Worlds'
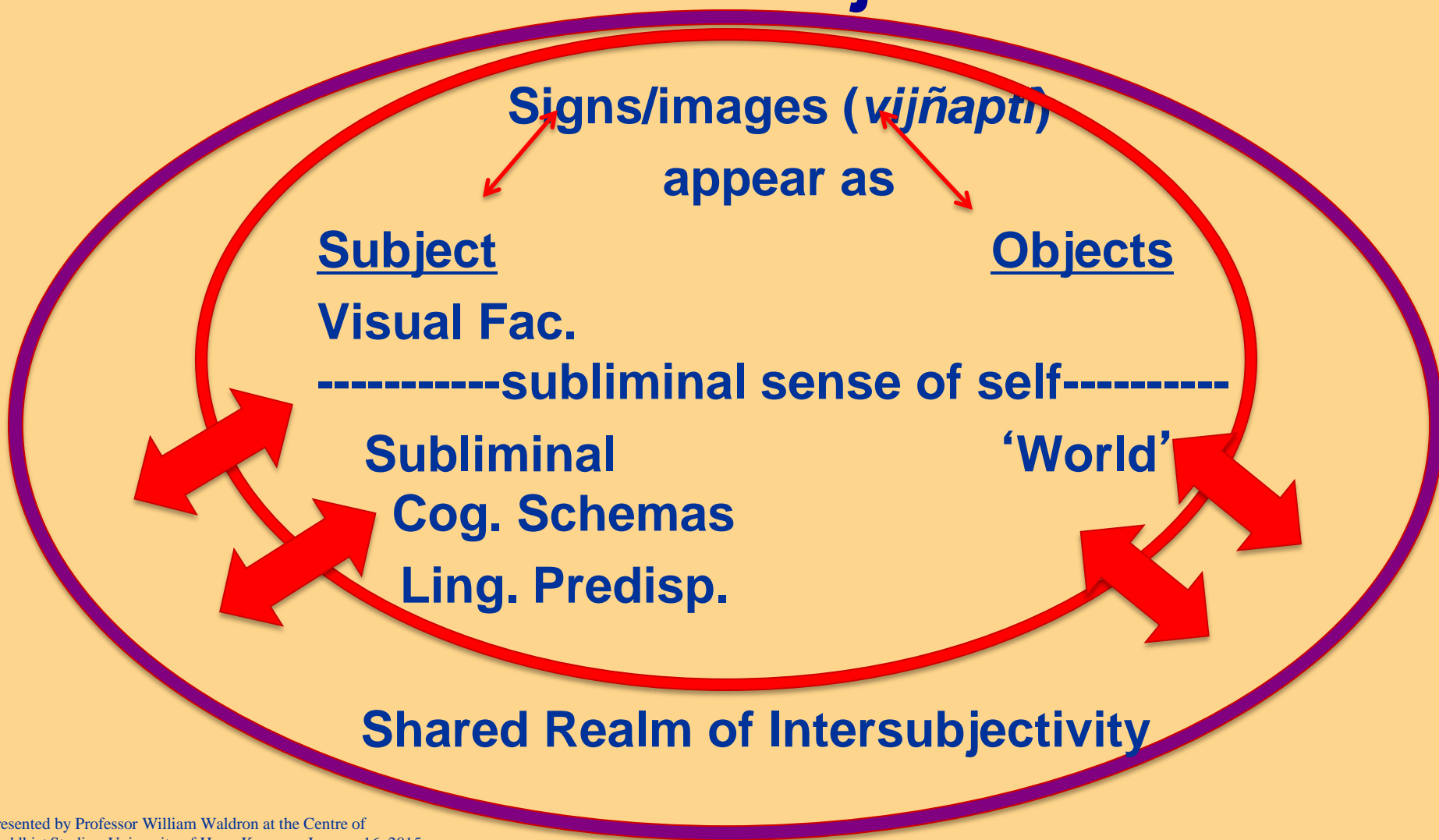
Signs/images (*vijñapti*)

appear as

Subject   **Objects**

Visual Fac.

----------subliminal sense of self----------

Subliminal   **'World'**

 Cog. Schemas

 Ling. Predisp.

Shared Realm of Intersubjectivity

Progression of Yogācāra Analysis

- **Core existential/epistemological fault is imputing duality**
  - **signs/representations (*vijnapti*) arise appearing as independently existing agent distinct from independent object.**
  - **i.e. as an autonomous agent alienated from 'objective' reality**

Grapsed and grasper (grāhya, grāhaka; 所取能取),

- **New terms denoting aspects of our cognitive processes: apparent objects are the 'grasped' or apprehended 所取 seeming subject is the 'grasper' or apprehender 能取.**

- **These very terms signify their crucial <u>karmic</u> role and highlight their <u>grammatical</u> *inter*dependence: <u>a grasper grasps the grasped</u> like an actor acts an action or a painter paints a painting.**

Vasubandhu's Twenty Verses

"the three realms are just cognitive representation (*vijñapti-mātra* 唯識)."

Vasubandhu then states that *citta*, *manas*, *vijñāna* and *vijñapti* are synonyms (*paryāyā*) and

that the phrase 'just' (*mātra*) serves to reject the idea of *artha* as some kind of objective or external referent.

What is denied?
Independently existing *artha* 義 !

Artha has multiple meanings:

aim, purpose, cause, motive, reason, wealth, concern, sense, meaning, and referent, and cognitive object.

Siddhārtha: has accomplished (*siddha*) his aim (*artha*).'

Artha is thus an intentional object in the sense that it is an object *for us*, one that we are necessarily engaged with. This broad semantic range distinguishes *artha* from the more narrowly cognitive ranges of *viṣaya* and *ālambana*.

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What is affirmed? *Vijñapti* 了別
# Percept, representation, sign, image?

- *vijñapti* is a noun made from a causative form of the verb 'to know' (*jñā*) = 'to make known' or 'inform,' like '*prajñapti*,' declaration' or 'conventional designation.'

- *vijñapti* more specifically "designates the basic phenomenon of conscious experience, without requiring its separation into object, subject, and act of cognition" Bruce Hall (1986, 8)

Signs/Images (*vijnapti*) <u>appear</u> as <u>In</u>dependent Subject and Object
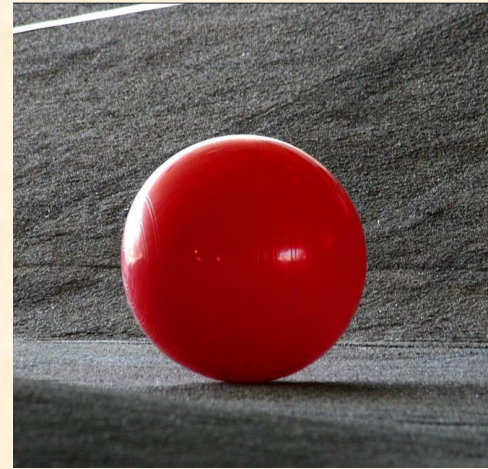
Cognitive Images <u>appear</u> as:

<u>Independently</u>
<u>Existent</u>
<u>Subject</u>

<u>Independently</u>
<u>Existing</u>
<u>Object</u>

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Progression of Yogācāra Analysis

- Core existential/epistemological fault is imputing duality
  - signs/representations (*vijnapti*) arise appearing as independently existing agent distinct from independent object.
  - i.e. as an autonomous agent alienated from 'objective' reality

- See imputation as interdependent cognitive processes
  - informed by embodied cognitive schemas: concepts 'I', object
  - from all-pervasive 'normative' influences of cognition, culture

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Signs/Images (*vijnapti*) seen as Interdependent Subject and Object

Cognitive Images appear as:

Independently
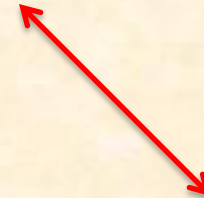
Existent

Subject

Independently

Existing

Object

Interdependent Subject/Object based on Subliminal Schemas

Cognitive Images appear as:

Ind. Subject: 'self'   Ind. Object

------------------subliminal sense of self--------------

Cog. Schemas   Subliminal

   Ling. Predisp. "I"   'World'

Cognitive Science: Self & World are Representations/images

"**First, our brains generate <u>a world-simulation,</u> so perfect that <u>we do not recognize it as an image in our minds</u>.**

Then, they generate <u>an inner image of ourselves</u> as a whole.

The <u>internal image </u>of the person-as-a-whole is <u>the phenomenal Ego, the 'I' or 'self'</u> as it appears in conscious experience." Metzinger, *Ego Tunnel,* 7

Recognizing Representation-only

- "human beings know that some of their conscious experiences…are <u>only representations</u> in their minds…
Not only were we able to have conscious thoughts,
but we could also experience them *<u>as thoughts</u>*…

- "the discovery of the <u>appearance/reality distinction</u> was possible because we realized that some of the content of our conscious minds is <u>constructed internally</u> and because we could <u>introspectively apprehend the construction process</u>…

- Therefore, we know that our <u>thoughts</u> are <u>not given but *made*</u>."

  Metzinger, 61

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Progression of Yogācāra Analysis

- Core existential/epistemological fault is imputing duality
  - signs/representations (*vijnapti*) arise appearing as independently existing agent distinct from independent object.
  - i.e. as an autonomous agent alienated from 'objective' reality
- See imputation as interdependent cognitive processes
  - informed by embodied cognitive schemas: concepts 'I', object
  - from all-pervasive 'normative' influences of cognition, culture
- **'Liberation': by thorough causal analysis, coming to see all as 'representation/sign/image only (*vijñapti-mātra*)**

Why did the Buddha mention 'material' sense spheres?

- **The Blessed one stated with a certain intention (*abhiprāya*) the existence of the sense spheres, such as form, <u>for the sake of those people who needed to be instructed</u> with that kind of idea. (v. 8)**

- **In order to demonstrate that "there is no single agent of visual perception" (ad v. 10, Dunne), that there are only *dharma*s and their causes. And "it is in this way that they come to understand the selflessness of <u>persons</u> (*pudgala-nairātmya*; 補特伽羅無我)**

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Buddha did not teach <u>independent</u> existence of dharmas

- **Just because the faculties and their objects are taught by the Buddha, this does <u>not</u> mean that they <u>have independently existing natures</u> (*lakṣaṇa*; 相).**

- **It is true, he admits, that "<u>childish people conceptually construct a nature (*svabhāva*) for dharmas</u>, such as the nature of being grasped and grasping" (*grāhya, grāhaka* 所取能取; objects, subjects; ad 10d). these too are just cognitive representations (*vijñapti-mātra*).**

Vijñāpti-mātra as entrance to selflessness of dharmas 法空

- "And teaching about persons and things in another way brings people to understand the <u>essencelessness</u> of things 法空. //10bc//

- 'In another way' means that one teaches everything is just cognitive representation. How does this bring people to understand the essencelessness of things 法空?

- One begins to understand it by understanding the following: there is just cognitive representation, and that cognitive representation arises with the appearance of form and so on; <u>there is no thing whatsoever that actually has the characteristic of form, and so on.</u> (*rūpādi-lakṣaṇa*)." Dunne

Not non-existence!

- One does <u>not</u>, he argues, "begin to understand the essencelessness of *dharma*s by thinking '<u>*dharma*s do not exist in any way at all</u>."

- Rather, "*dharmas are without essence in terms of their conceptually constructed nature*" (*kalpitātmanā*) (10d) (Dunne, trans. altered).

- He is not saying there are no objects whatsoever; he is saying those objects have no essences as ignorant people imagine them to have.

- But they do have an <u>ineffable nature (</u>*anabhilāpyena ātmanā*), which is the object (*viṣaya*, not *artha*) of awakened beings, such as the Buddha, who see them as they truly are.

Vijñapti-mātra 唯識 **is also essenceless** 法空 **way to see selflessness of dharmas**

- **"In this way, one realizes that <u>even a mere cognitive representation is essenceless</u> in terms of the essence that is conceptually constructed by other cognitive representations;**

- **"therefore, <u>through the determination that all *dharma*s are just cognitive representations, one comes to understand that all *dharma*s are without essence</u>. One does <u>not</u> come to this understanding by <u>completely</u> <u>denying their existence</u>." (ad 10d)**

conclusion

- *Vijñāpti-mātra* = just cognitive constructs
- Our usual experience of the world is just *vijñāpti*
- *Vijñāpti* <u>arises</u> dependent on multiple conditions

- Should favor subtle syntax of dependent arising over the crude metaphors of storage and seeds;
  Vijñāna neither 'cognizes' nor 'projects' the world

- 'World' appears in dependence on conditions, especially our dispositions toward reification.

Three Natures (*trisvabhāva*)

- **We imagine are independently existing entities (*parikalpita-svabhāva*).**

- **These appearances, though false, nevertheless arise in dependence on specific mental processes (*paratantra-svabhāva*).**

- **When one ultimately sees them as they 'truly are' (*pariniṣpannā-svabhāva*), then one is freed from bondage to mere appearances.**

Whoever sees dependent arising also sees suffering and its arising and its cessation as well as the path.

(Nagārjuna, MMK XXIV 40)

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