

## **WINNICOTT AND LACAN AND THE LACK WITHIN SUBJECTIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF DZOGCHEN**

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I will discuss Subjectivity as Lack and the Realm of Ontological Insecurity in Lacan and Winnicott from within the Context of Dzogchen. Primordial awareness manifests within us as our own subjectivity. This is the understanding both of Dzogchen and certain contemporary forms of Western phenomenology. This theme of primordial awareness manifesting as subjectivity is also the focus of the eight century Dzogchen source text the The Sovereign All-Creating Mind - The Motherly Buddha. Psychoanalyst such as Lacan and Winnicott focus on the ontological insecurity of being a subject, being a self, being a self constituted by awareness. In this paper the base of awareness as emptiness or space, or void or openness, or potential space or nothingness is described in light of Winnicott and Lacan's work on subjectivity and lack.

Lacan and Winnicott were profoundly aware of the lack that lies at the core of subjectivity, this missingness in the sense of self. In their clinical work around this lack, Lacan and Winnicott used different clinical approaches to study this existential actuality. Winnicott and Lacan knew that a person has to encounter the void within themselves as a self, as a subject, as a person.

Both, Lacan and Winnicott, knew that at the innermost core of a person there is this innermost space, this incommunicado space that is to be experienced and that is to be held, and contained, and sustained. This space should not be impinged or penetrated upon and this space is beyond words and language, beyond mind. There is this hole, or emptiness, or void, or space at the innermost core of subjectivity; this emptiness is the essence of subjectivity. For Lacan and Winnicott the dynamic of the unconscious was this opening, this emptiness, this gap of this incommunicable dimension. Known but not easily thought, known but not thinkable, unthought but known is the challenge of understanding the invisible and bringing the invisible into visibility. Their descriptions of human subjectivity allowed Lacan and Winnicott to work with and describe in their own way the fundamental agonies and anxieties associated with the person's foundational existence as a person, as subjectivity, as self, as the awareness field.

Although Winnicott and Lacan realized that it is the lack of a sense of self that lies at the core of subjectivity, their clinical psychotherapy approaches differed. For Winnicott, the capacity was to be with and to be attuned to the innermost awareness as subjectivity. To hold awareness with and within the matrix of this mutually held field brings forth the container and support for the sense of subjectivity. The emerging sense of self must move through void states of experience

within the very void arises the unfolding of ongoing continuity of aliveness. The continuity of beingness, the continuity of the aliveness, the continuity of presence, the aliveness of innermost self, is the aliveness of the “True Self” to use Winnicott’s wonderful phrase.

Within the void, by entering into the void, there can be experience of self arising presence of the beingness of being of the person. Void as source, void as primordial openness from which and from within which continuity of being and the very experience of awareness of being takes place as presence, as aliveness, as continuity, as ongoing subjectivity, as the continuity of being, as the knower of knowingness.

For Winnicott, void and beingness are in oneness. As Winnicott would say “emptiness is waiting to fill up”. In this way, Winnicott is a Dzogchen master that is a master of awareness.

For Lacan, the focus of the healing relationship was to assist the person in experiencing the void or emptiness and from within this void of awareness (metabolism of awareness) experience the liquidation of identificatory relationships. In the language of semiology this is called the dissolving of signifiers that were attributions of others. For Lacan many of the mirroring relationships are mirrored attributions of the Others’ opinions of us internalized by us. Many of the mirroring relationships are mirrored signifiers that were the attribution of otherness. This internalized otherness fosters a sense of false subjectivity. The sense of lack arises as the sense of the other opinions of one’s self are internalized by one’s self. One’s desire becomes the function of the desire of another. One’s imaginary identifications with the Others’ opinions takes place rather than one’s own identification with one’s subjective essence which is emptiness, or openness, or no-thingness. Therefore one’s own voidness, spaciousness, emptiness, and openness are the source of desire. Primordial awareness itself is the source of desire; one’s own innermost desire arises out of primordial awareness. This primordial awareness which is no-thingness and yet from which everything and anything can arise.

And therefore Lacan was also a Dzogchen master. By Dzogchen master I mean the master of awareness. As Namkai Norbu, the great contemporary master of Dzogchen, says “Dzogchen does not belong to any religion and neither is it simply a philosophy nor a cultural tradition rather Dzogchen is the capacity to experience our real condition freed from self deceptions”.

Lacan focused instead on our misfilling the void with imaginary identifications, he focused on void or lack as source. Lacan understood that subjective freedom, or freedom of subjectivity could manifest because of the courage to face the truth that the sense of fundamental lack was necessary for the experience of subjectivity to enter completion. Subjectivity as void, as abyss, as spaciousness, as openness, as light. These are existential development passages that many people pass through. The innermost abyss is the doorway to liberation. But one has to be up for the play of awareness and not overly psychologize this endeavor with cloudy affectivity and wobbly cognitions and relentless linguistic mental representations which are imposing mind identifications on the void of awareness...the sea of awareness. Within the sea of qi courage and affection are necessary. Feeling sorry for oneself is a poor strategy for self liberation.

Both, Lacan and Winnicott, understood that mirroring was of great importance. Winnicott understood that for a person to be the attuned mirror of the other, to be attuned to the innermost potentiality (space) which is subjectivity of the other is a healing possibility. The place of potentialness in one's self is the instrument of healing. Potentiality experiencing the potential place in the other. This non verbal attunement of potential self to potential self, this inside to inside resonance is the force of aliveness that continuously brings forth manifestation of subjectivity, of innermost presence. This attunement of awareness within awareness reflects the wonderful capacity to be in the intermediate area of experience in mutual, transitional space. To be held in the oneness of the awareness field is liberation that allows for the dissolving of misidentifications and supports the experience of the natural self arising of presence, aliveness, vast openness, a continuity of being. For Winnicott being and nothingness were in oneness. For Winnicott Mirroring was positive and for Lacan mirroring can be both positive and fragmenting.

For Winnicott the attunement or resonance or extension takes place at a nonverbal prereflective level of awareness, and not within mind alone.

For Lacan when the mirroring is not simply that of awareness' attunement to awareness, but rather the mirror's becoming one person's mind, attuning to the others person's mind alone. This is when this mirroring actually is the reflection of mental opinion and phantasm about the subjectivity of the other. The internalization of these mind opinions becomes the externalized source of subjectivity, becomes the source of excentric subjectivity and falsely rescues one from the void of subjectivity. The cost is that the Other becomes the source of subjectivity. The big Other's opinions stand behind one's subjectivity and actually the Other's opinions do not really exist, but are purely imaginary. Such internalizations of others' signifiers about them rest in the imaginary register of mind. Internalized Opinion's or signifiers only exist in this imaginary dimension of mind alone. In time these internalized opinions of the other become a form of the master-slave relationship]. In this way an imaginary self is formed from imaginary opinions, from an imaginary mirror to an imaginary sense of wellbeing. Behind the imaginary adaptation is the actual suffering of lack or void, and within this configuration annihilation anxiety and deprivation become a felt sense and the person is ontologically terrified.

Now, of course, the primitive superego comes to the rescue and so the superego, the judgmentalness of mind alone becomes another substitute for true subjectivity and true personhood. The sense of potentiality is usurped by the primitive superego and so now the person has the substitution of a cruel master who provides imaginary security.

Lacanian Superego as the Substitution for Subjectivity and Lack.

For Lacan, the superego minimizes awareness, minimizes whoness. Lacan re-understood the Freudian superego as judgmentalness and re-introduced judgmentalness into the French philosophical tradition. His translation was from an entity or super structure of the mind of the

classical psychoanalytic frame to the experiential symbolic frame of a spectacle and spectator. From within the perceptual field judgmentalness arises, the spectator of judgment arises, and as the saying goes "Here Comes the Judge!" This judgmentalness, this judgment is both considered to be the absolute truth and beyond doubt. Thus the person becomes the one who knows. And the sense of subjectivity is sealed over and concealed in this spectacle of the spectator sphere. Thus there is a relentless criticalness, sado-masochistic enactments, and the giving of torment to one's self and others. This sense of basic lack, this nothingness invokes these deprivation and annihilation anxieties. With all this there is the sense of powerlessness in action, and the impotency of rage, murderous rage. Polite people call it anger.

This spectacle self is itself at times a comedy and at times a caricature and may be funny and bizarre and even entertaining. Yet the scenes are terrifying. The person's entire being and sense of being is organized within this spectacle as the spectator, the viewer. The spectator makes endless judgments, endless observations and notations as the one who knows what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, what is true and what is false, what is better and best. This is the mind of the "Pharisee". The "Pharisee" is the one who knows, and knows, and knows, and knows.

This person's life is somewhat like the two characters in "Waiting for Godot" in that nothing actually happens other than endless, relentless judgments about what is happening and what is not happening or what should be happening. Eternal commenting, relentless commenting! There are of course sado-masochistic interludes where the person suffers for the sake of something or suffers for the sake of the other or relentlessly imposes suffering on another for something or other. Every event is the opportunity for judgment. Children of course are excellent targets for such a mind, such a moralistic judgmental mind. A would-be superior mind of absolute knowledge! Opinion as the truth! Gangsters are moralistic, perhaps having the most moralistic sadistic view of us all. Even psychopathic personalities have their own demented form of superego, their own form of judgmentalness, their own form of moral-sadism. The absolute moral judgment is most importantly acted out as the last judgment, the final judgment of the imposition of death on the other.

Religious people also revel in the moments of moral judgmentalness, orgasmic judgmentalness. For the religious mind, even death is contrived or configured within the torture of judgmentalness, final judgmentalness. Wow, you miss the glimpse of the light, or wow, you let the archetypes terrify you and now you will find yourself being a dog in someone's back yard. Wow, you did not recognize Jesus and so you are condemned forever. Wow, outside the church there is no salvation. Wow, you did not keep the samaya, so you are lost for eons. You said something nasty about the teacher and so you will suffer forever.

The liberation of subjectivity, the bliss of freedom comes about by directly knowing and knowing experientially your fundamental awareness which you can experience as spaceousness, openness, voidness, emptiness, spontaneous presence, luminous clarity. By

knowing these qualities that constitute your self as subjectivity, liberation arises. Since your subjectivity and another's person subjectivity are constituted by primordial awareness, paradoxically, this primordial awareness can be experienced as the abyss of emptiness or abyss of lack, the abyss of annihilation and the abyss of deprivation. This primordial awareness which is your subjectivity can be experienced as void or nothingness. This primordial awareness which is your very own subjectivity can also be experienced as vast unbound spaceousness infinite in its horizons. Primordial awareness, your very own subjectivity, can be experienced as vast openness, just openness beyond words and letters. Primordial awareness, your very own subjectivity, can be experienced as spontaneous presence, pure presence beyond your mind. Your innermost awareness which is subjectivity can be experienced as innermost luminosity, light, clear radiant light. Your own innermost awareness subjectivity can be experienced as compassion, as the sense of oneness, knowing- and loving-oneness, potentiality knowing-potentiality.

In the emptiness of awareness, one's mind can inscribe within the emptiness of awareness words, letters, and signifiers. This act is a bit like writing with one's finger tips on water, water in a bucket, water in a stream, and water in the ocean. Writing and inscribing interpretations from one's mind within the sea of awareness. Taking one's mind's affect and placing it on the sea of awareness - there is a dissolving. One will not know awareness by mind alone. In fact, one will be passing on into the field of awareness explanations of mind and the attributions of other opinions which one has internalized in one's imaginary mind and transmitting these opinions into the field of primordial awareness, this field of emptiness, spaceous - one's own subjectivity. These placements of mind all disappear, they all dissolve within awareness. Only no-thingness remains. This often happens when masters of awareness speak. One remembers nothing.

A person can enter the depth of the awareness field and within the spaceousness of potentiality experience pure potentiality. Potentiality is not the probability estimates of the mind which result in hope or hopelessness. Potential space is open space and unbound space, non conceptual space beyond words and letters. Presence, the pure presence of primordial awareness is the pervasive experience of this dimension of reality as potential space. To experience the pervasiveness of potential space is to experience the freedom of the innermost awareness. This vast awareness as experience can both be in time and in timeless awareness. Timeless awareness is sustained, it is beyond past, beyond present and beyond future. In this way timeless awareness is unborn and undying.

### The Configuration of the Superego Being Dissolved within the Space of Potentiality

To deconstruct the judgmentalness of the super ego one can from within the inner heart essence of potential space, of innermost awareness extend the power of the awareness field into the mind cutting through the configuration of the judgmentalness as well as the results of the judgmentalness on one's own self, such as doubt. This cutting through is a key skill in the

tradition of Dzogchen and is a powerful, direct infusion and liquifies both the signifiers as well as the function of judgmentalness itself. This cutting through of awareness into mind is symbolized by the phurba, or dagger, or the sword. That is the mantra that symbolizes this direct cutting through action of luminous energy arising from the inner place of awareness.

The configuration of judgmentalness itself can be pulled into the heart essence of awareness, that place of awareness within the heart expanse, and in doing so dissolving can take place as well as the undoing of the signifiers that have been internalized. This is a function of the great metabolism power of the awareness field.

When two people are holding the matrix of the field together in the field of awareness then the mind and the construction of the superego are emerged into the energetic vortexual winds of innermost awareness. The signifiers and functions of judgmentalness can be dissolved in the mutually held vase of awareness. The luminous energy dissolves the mind functions and signifiers.

#### Objects Behind the Superego Judgmentalness - the Object behind the Mirror

Lacan suggests that behind the internalized opinions is an object, a person. Behind the mirrored attributions is the mirroring object. Behind the self imposed judgements is the mirror of the judgmental person. Besides the mirrored attributions is the mirror itself. The mirroring object is the object behind the attributions. First the attributions are dissolved, then the mirror itself is dissolved. The mirror as an object is dissolved. This is not a question of hating the mirroring object or loving the mirroring object. But, the mirror as objectifying others must be dissolved and metabolized by the power of awareness field. The objectifying mirror results in a sense of objectified subjectivity. The objectified sense of subjectivity results in a cohorted sense of self and a contracted state of primordial awareness.

This dissolving of the objectifying mirroring object is easy to understand. The bad object that stands behind the superego must be dissolved. But, the good enough mirroring object must also be dissolved. The object in the mind, even the good object, serves an important function for a period of time, but in times the good object in the mind must be dissolved so that the subjectivity of awareness as awareness as the true subjectivity, true base, can emerge. Up to a point the good object plays a great role in the mirroring and stability of subjectivity. But the good object itself must be dissolved into awareness itself. The support of primordial awareness is the base for subjectivity without substitution of mental images. This dissolving of mirroring images allows for the symbolic function of awareness itself to be the innate support.

The good enough object behind the sense of self is great and necessary in the beginning, but not good enough in the long run. Just like meeting the guru is great, but one must experience the light of awareness as one's own. The radiance and expanse of awareness as one's own. The guru mirrors the light of your own innermost awareness and is actually not a real object, but exercises a symbolic function.

The good enough object can stand behind us. Eventually the good enough object dissolves and what remains is awareness. The gift of the good enough object is love, and love is experienced and within the gratitude of love, love remains.

The mirroring object whether good or not-good must be dissolved so that pure subjectivity can manifest in clarity and openness and unboundedness. The mirroring object plays a necessary and supportive role in the manifestation of personal awareness. And in time, these mirroring objects are dissolved and become memory, memory as source of gratitude. As the object of mind dissolves, the actual existential actuality of the supporting beings remain in the actual field of the being being supported. The mental dissolving of image allows the direct support to be experienced. There is the difference between having the object in the mind, and the object as the actual, the existential actuality stand behind the person. This is a living trace of relational experience. These traces are traces within the field of awareness and are easily activated and amplified throughout life by extension and profound resonance.

Such process results in an empty mind and fullness of awareness field!

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