



Psychoanalysis

During the late 1970's and 80's, I taught Zen and clinical – especially analytic – psychology throughout the University of California Extension Colleges. I was then on the faculty of the College of Buddhist Studies teaching Zen meditation.

The 1980's were an exciting time for psychoanalysis as they had more or less discarded Freud and Jung and moved onto understanding the self, which at that time was considered fantasy; that is, researchers no longer considered the ego to be a thing, but rather a bunch of images, memories, thoughts, etc., that got strung together through development.

By this time I had burnt out of just sitting and practicing the "Who Am I?" inquiry. Maybe 15 years had passed doing this inquiry in various ways without any definitive result. Lots of meditation states, lots of Samadhis, lots of solved koans and tens of thousands of hours of sitting.

During the later 70's I had begun reading the various object relation theorists, including Harry Guntrip and James Grotstein in Los Angeles. Finding that immersion in emptiness and background consciousness was kind of boring, after awhile I began looking at the mechanisms within consciousness that were creating the boundaries, such as dichotomies, between inside and outside, self and not self, consciousness and unconsciousness.

That is, how did Consciousness get structure, and what did the process of self-inquiry do to these boundaries? It was also about this time I was talking to Ken

Wilber, Dan Browne, Jack Engler and others working on developing transpersonal psychology.

I attended a graduate school in psychology in Los Angeles during the mid-1980s and wrote a Masters Thesis and a doctoral dissertation on these mentation/identification processes with the help of my psychologist mentor, Eric Reitz. I distilled some basic concepts that came out of this research and wrote two papers, one published in the [International Philosophical Journal](#), the other in the [Journal of Humanistic Psychology](#).

I tried to merge what I had learned about the experience of Consciousness in meditation and what I learned about self-identification processes in psychotherapy.

Part of what I showed was that practicing various forms of meditation appeared to be used by some people as a distraction from psychic pain, or as a conscious ego defensive mechanism. You have to remember that all psychological pain occurs in the imaginal space with apparent personal objects constructed out of mind and imaging. Pain can be avoided in many ways, either by deliberately ignoring it over a period of time, which becomes repression, or "delinking" the image/idea complex, "evaporating it" to reveal its empty nature.

The prime discovery though was of the imaginal space itself and the movement of the locus of Consciousness through that imaginal space that both reveals and creates both internal subjective self-structures, and the apparent external world.

It was shortly after this that I began to practice psychotherapy and performing psychological evaluations for Workers' Compensation. It was also around this time I met Robert Adams and all interest in this stuff went away. I found it totally irrelevant.

The paper below was written in 1987 and published in 1989, about the time I met Robert. Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, Dan Browne and I had been exchanging compliments about each other's works for two years until we fell out of love concerning what we each believed to be the basic nature of the phenomenal self, whether or not there was an evolution or maturation of the fantasy self and appropriate therapies at each stage. I believed the fantasy self was just that, a dream so-to-speak, with no evolution possible.

That is, the fantasy self has no existence; it is a concept with no reality behind it. If anything, the unfolding of Consciousness itself creates the I, not the I evolving to find divine Consciousness. Of course, writing at the time as a

humanistic object-relations psychologist, I wrote from the perspective of stabilizing the fantasy self in order to function in the world.

I did point out possible mechanisms by which the non-existent ego was created out of spontaneous movements within Consciousness. I expressed the theory in several places that it was spontaneous movements within Consciousness that revealed hidden structures in the self which through a process of moving back and forth across an imaginary self-other boundary, created an ever growing sense of 'I-ness'.

This still seems like it could be a very important area of research for the future: How do the fantasy personal I and the impersonal I Am core come into existence? What are the differentiating microprocesses from the subjective point of view? This is no longer my work, but some of you might want to run with it. One other well known psychoanalyst has.

After meeting Robert, all these psychological conceptualizations dropped away as irrelevant. Eventually, all conceptualizations dropped away as irrelevant and as an extremely unrewarding waste of perfectly good brain cells.

Back in the 80's, psychiatrists were going to Zen masters and Hindu Gurus looking for new directions in research which did not help their patients at all. The typical clinical pathologies of anxiety and depression are most quickly eased through medication which became predominant in the 1980s until today. Now, usually talk therapy and medication are used together and are far more helpful than either used separately. However, the complex and painstaking approach of analytic psychology, the personal/psychological analog to Buddhist and Advaita self-inquiry, is dead, sidetracked by the rapid ability of medication to reduce psychological pain and the economics of the profession. Very few people go into depth in psychology to go beyond what they are.

One positive element of this paper is the description of a psychotherapy/meditative technique that I call 'microanalysis', where the person who supposedly exists, can supposedly focus on the various phenomenal aspects of their body-mind, such as the tactile and visual senses, as well as emotions and the inner fantasy world, which "atomizes" the apparently discrete and complex phenomena-bundle comprising the self, revealing the background of emptiness upon which this complex displays. This technique can be used to end emotional pain by 'atomizing' or shredding it into its many sub-components. It also familiarizes the apparent searcher with their own non-existence against the backdrop of emptiness, or Void.

When one introspects the apparent I, eventually the background of emptiness becomes the foreground, and eats up both the I and the world.

Neo-Advaitins

A side note. There are a whole bunch of neo-Advaitins, or as Shankaranada calls them, California Advaitins, that accept the end result of Advaita as only the recognition of the non-existence of a personal I. They eschew practice and say "enlightenment" is all about seeing there is no personal self to be enlightened. It is knowledge. Of course they say there is no one to be enlightened. Some say to just look inside yourself for an I, and seeing there is none, become instantly free.

This is a complex subject I will not explore in depth here, but let's say that what they are talking about is a kind of tip of the tongue enlightenment and ignores the universal advice of all the great teachers to practice self-inquiry. There is far more to Nisargadatta or Ramana than seeing that the word I has no object referred to in our inner worlds. Yet, they are satisfied with this discovery and then even deduce all the finding of Advaita from this thin foundation.

But if you look at the books I wrote in the 1980s, you can clearly see that psychoanalytic theory as a whole had long abandoned that there was an entity that the word 'I' referred to, whether it be ego, id, or superego. Indeed, the object relations theorists were exploring the processes subjectivity along with Piaget's cognitive developmental stages attempting to understand how the fantasy self, the image/thought/memory complex developed and differentiated from the external world. That is, they were trying to understand Nisargadatta's I Am complex.

Back then we explored the various defense mechanisms against the imaginary self feeling psychic pain. Many theorists took emotions as real while most regarded the external world as real, but unknowable. Others explored the processes which created a subjective sense of self out of chaos, or out of an undifferentiated matrix experience of the 'other.'

No one in psychoanalysis thought that there was an ego anymore. They knew they were exploring fantasy/memory/thought processes as well as subjective mechanisms such as diverting attention repeatedly, which resulted in repression of unwanted experiences. Most all of these thousands of theorists had long before concluded there was no I. Yet, they certainly did not find that to be an end-point of investigation, but merely a beginning point.

Likewise, this was the high point of Zen and Vipassana meditation along with Buddhist epistemology and ontology. Psychologists, psychiatrists and neurologists were all investigating Eastern spirituality mostly in the exploration and understanding of emptiness and the void as it related to an abstract understanding of Consciousness, as well as understanding our own experience of phenomena within the field of the void.

No one who studied any formless meditation for more than a year or two believed there was an ego. None was to be found. In fact, meditation taught many that the resting mind state often led to a disappearance of the boundaries between body and world, self and world, self and body, etc. Again, few believed in an I object or ego, as all that was ever found were bundles of phenomena rattling around in emptiness. But again, few considered themselves.

Most experienced various Samadhis after 3-4 years of meditation, wherein the Void gets experienced as the self, and nothing more is experienced. Others feel as if they become everything and there is no boundary or space between one's sense of identity and the experience of world phenomena.

Yet the California Advaitins seem to express the position that you only have to look inside your subjectivity once, and not seeing an object there which the word I points too, results in the sudden realization that neither the you nor the world exists, and that only Brahma exists, etc.

The California Advaitins do not talk about Samadhi or various levels of self; they regard these all as only transient experiences, while their "knowledge" is permanent. They deny that knowledge is just as changeable.

Let me just say there is far, far more to Advaita than their tip of the tongue freedom.

Anyway, for those who want to explore this area, and I think it still may hold value for future research, begin by reading the 'Object Relations Theory, Buddhism and the Self' (pdf download below). This was one of two academic papers I published partially as a critique of Transpersonal Psychology, which was big at the time.



[object_relations_theory_etc.pdf](#)

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I also wrote three books during this period, all expansions on my Master's thesis and Ph.D. dissertations written in 1985 and 1986. The books were written between 1986 and 1988, a year before I met Ramesh Balsakar and Robert.

I include these books because if there is an investigation of the ways psychic structures are created, we will know better how to either fix bad linkages or uncreate them altogether, i.e., to get free. This could be a whole new movement in the field of psychology.

The first book is entitled "Exploring the Inner world; Therapeutic Introspection and the Healing Self" which explores processes in Consciousness and the mechanisms of self-building and self-defense. I spend a lot of time describing "microanalysis" and processes of identification and differentiation.

I can't find the original manuscript, so I took apart one of the books and scanned it. It was printed on an old style dot matrix printer and the scanning software could not recognize the words well, therefore, individual chapters are posted as image pdfs. These are large files. I have posted the chapters separately due to their size.

Exploring the Inner World - Introduction



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Exploring the Inner World - Epilogue



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The second book is more about psychotherapy and how the self creates itself out of nothingness. This is not what I exactly say in the book, but that is what I meant. It is called "The Experience of Self." Chapter 1 is below. At this time there is no plan to add additional chapters due to the length of time it takes to scan, read, edit and convert each page into a pdf file.

The Experience of Self - Chapter 1



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NOTE: If you have any interest at all about self-psychology or object relations theory, you have to read Grotstein's "Splitting and Projective Identification," and even more importantly, Guntrip's Schizoid Phenomena, Object Relations and the Self."
