

FIELD AWARENESS AND THE NATURE OF 'PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION'

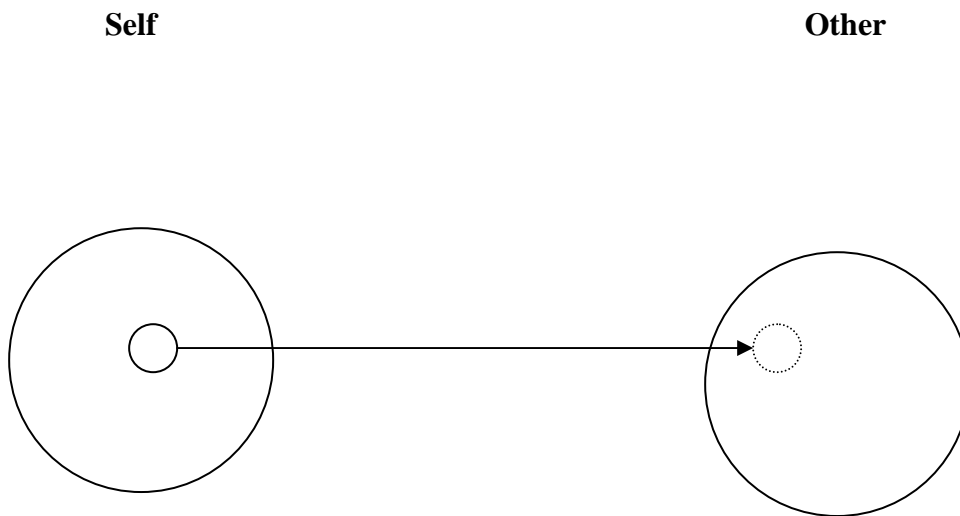


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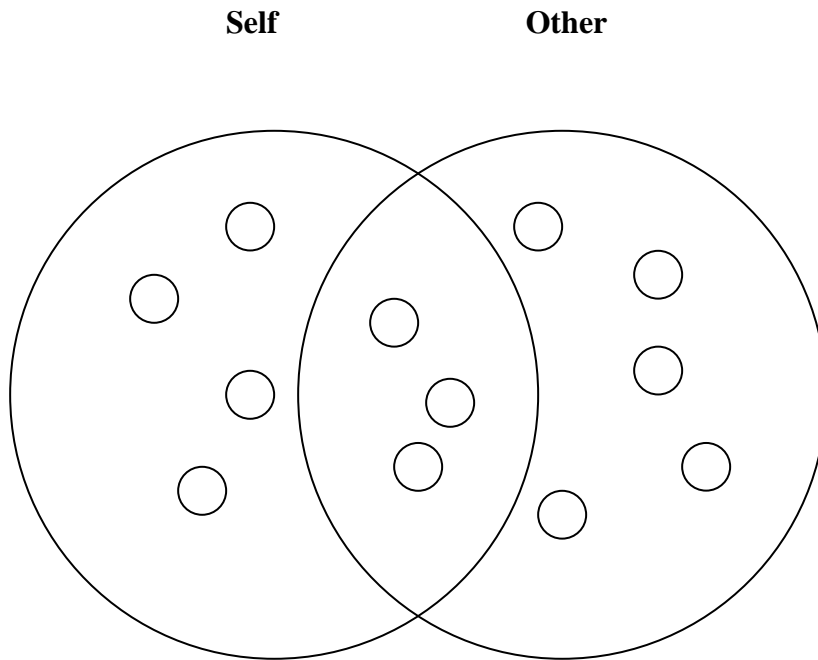
If we do not conceive of individual ‘mind’ or consciousness as the property of a punctiform subject located somewhere in his or her head or brain, but instead as a field of awareness, and conceive the essence bodyhood, not as a physical object bounding an individual’s awareness, but as a boundary-field or field-boundary *of* awareness - then we can also generate a newer and truer model of ‘projective identification’. This is a model that does not assume or imply the existence of separate subjects, psyches or consciousnesses - one of whom projects or expels ‘internal’ objects from within itself whilst the other ‘internalises’ or has them projected ‘into’ them. This crude model is pictured below

Diagram 3



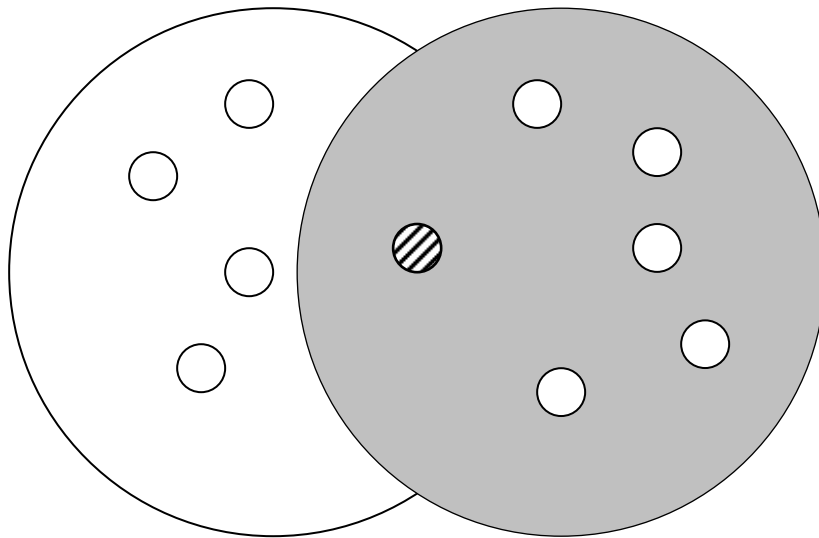
An alternative model of intersubjectivity and projective identification (Diagram 4) is based on the idea not of separated subjects but of overlapping *fields of awareness* - thus creating an area of overlap which is the *intersubjective field*. For here, as in Diagram 2 (see Introduction) the larger circles representing each individual are to be understood as *fields* of pure awareness or subjectivity, each of which embraces all elements or ‘contents’ of their subjective experience (the smaller circles). These elements of experience include not only perceptions, thoughts and emotions but also each individual’s experience of their own body and other bodies. The larger circle represent not only each individual’s awareness field as a whole but their larger body - essentially nothing but a non-physical ‘field boundary’ or ‘field body’ of awareness – their ‘awareness body’.

Diagram 4



Using this model as foundation, the process of ‘projective identification’ does not require the movement or ‘projection’ of an ‘internal object’ (in reality but an element of subjective experience) from one individual to another. Instead the ‘projective’ process is itself nothing but an *identification* of the intersubjective field of overlap of Self and Other, and of any shared element of subjective experience within that field - whether felt as a good or bad ‘object’ - solely *with* the other and *not* with the self – as in Diagram 5. Here, a *shared element* of subjective experience (the small hatched circle) is not so much ‘projected’ as identified solely with the other, seen as contained within *their* psyche, subjectivity or awareness field alone, rather than felt as an element within the field of overlap or *intersubjective field*. ‘Projective identification’ then, is thus both an act of *dis-identification* from any element of experience *shared* by Self and Other within the intersubjective field – and its *identification* solely *with* the Other.

Diagram 5



Notice how the result is a contraction of the ‘projecting’ individual’s own field of awareness – a loss not only of any element of their experience treated as a ‘bad object’ but also of any ‘good’ elements of their subjective experience previously shared within the *intersubjective field*. This is a new way of illustrating how the process of ‘projective identification’ can result in a sense of losing parts of oneself, or indeed whole ‘areas’ of subjective awareness. Diagram 5 also illustrates the converse process of internalizing or ‘introjecting’ an element of another’s subjective experience. For the individual whose awareness field is represented by the grey circle may also *occlude* the intersubjective field of overlap between Self and Other, thus treating one or more elements within this field purely as part of their own field – belonging solely to their own psyche and subjective identity.

What none of these purely dyadic diagrams fully bring into prominence however, is the *trans-personal* space or field of pure or transcendental awareness *around* the two circles, one that embraces *both* Self and Other within it. This surrounding space is a singular, all-embracing and universal field of ‘pure’ trans-personal or ‘transcendental’ awareness of the sort recognised in Indian thought as the very essence of the Divine – and of which all things and all persons are an individualised portion and expression.