The Subject of Citizenship

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ABSTRACT Considerations of citizenship of whatever kind demand an idea of citizenship. There cannot be an idea of citizenship without an account of the subject of citizenship. This paper argues that the subject of citizenship is “the individual” considered as an integrated unit of organic and subjective life. It is this idea of the individual that is the referent for the idea of self-preservation in early modern civil philosophy. It is difficult to appreciate the significance of “self-preservation” without using the vantage point of post-Freudian accounts of the self to open it up. Citizenship concerns the status of the human being considered as a person (a self). Citizenship also denotes the public aspect of individualism as this is instituted and secured through the agency of the state (considered in its republican sense as the state subject to law).

The Idea of Citizenship

I offer a set of propositions that sketch out a framework for thinking that is posited rather than systematically argued. The set of propositions I offer here are predicated on the argument that, if we are to think about citizenship in a way that resources us to critically evaluate institutions, practices, and discourses that are said to instantiate citizenship, or if we are to offer a practical ideal for citizenship, we must have an idea of citizenship. I believe that there is an idea of citizenship available to us within the history of the modern idea of society. The problem is that we can see it and open it up for further thought only if we first accept that citizenship makes no sense without an account of the subject of citizenship. Thus, I am proposing that the idea of citizenship must be intimately associated with an account of the subject of citizenship.

 Citizenship belongs to the more general family of phenomena that concern how the status of participants in social life is constructed. Citizenship however is a distinct species within the genus. It denotes the construction of the status of the participant in social life as “an individual”. It is the individual who is the person or subject of right, to use the Hegelian (1991) way of putting this. Citizenship, then, is inherently bound up with individualism.

 Citizenship concerns then the status aspect of individualism. When people act in ways that make their individuality—that of others as of them selves—possible, they are being a person who respects others as persons (Hegel, 1991, p. 69). The status of the person, then, is actualized only by means of the awareness of human subjects for whom it is meaningful.
to assume life as a person. The ethos of citizenship concerns all spheres of social life for it makes no sense to say that one can be a person only in one sphere of social life and not in another. In denoting all that is involved in making the status of the person the framework for human conduct, citizenship concerns the universal or public dimension of individualism. Since human conduct occurs in all spheres of social life, citizenship offers a specification of what it is to be a person in the company of other persons whether we are talking about the settings of family life, or those of friendship, employment, voluntary associations, or the official conduct of government.

The idea of citizenship, then, demands an integrated conception of social life as one that is organized so as to support the status of the participant in social life as a person. For an integrated conception of social life to be possible, there will have to be on offer an integrated conception of the human subject. “Individuality” refers to the construction of the human being in all aspects of its being as an integrated and unique unit of social action. If thought is to be something other than mere subjective opinion, it has to have anchorage in the historical world of citizenship talk and practice within which we find ourselves, a world that is constituted and reconstituted in relation to traditions of citizenship, both past and present. Self-preservation is an idea that is accorded axiomatic value in all the historical tributaries of civil philosophy, and it is here that I find the basis of the idea of citizenship I advocated. The idea of self-preservation breaks down into two inherently connected ideas: first, the positing of the human being as a self; and second, the proposition that it is as a self that the human being must be both valued and “preserved”. A good deal, then, must turn on what it means to be a self. I propose that the idea of the self denotes the establishment of the human being as an integrated unit of organic and subjective life. In the construction of the particular human being as an integrated unit of organic and subjective life, the human being is constructed as “an individual”. S/he is invited to assume his/her life as his/her own. S/he is welcomed as a person within the company of other persons so that in interaction these human subjects are aware of how each imbues the human capacities for movement, desire, and thought with his or her “idiom” (this term is Bollas’s, where he speaks of “the unique presence of being that each of us is; the idiom of our personality”; 1989, p. 9).

Without awareness of the individuality of oneself and others, the potential for individuality cannot be actualized as a mode of being in the world that human subjects share. It may be true of every human society that it provides some space for individuality understood as the unique presence of the human being as an embodied subject. However, without awareness of individuality, such space must remain very restricted, in turn making it difficult for awareness of individuality to develop. Awareness is not the same thing as consciousness; at issue are the conditions under which consciousness is turned into awareness. Under what conditions does consciousness of individuality become awareness of individuality? Is it likely that status permission for the human subject to present as an individual can be genuinely on offer without such awareness?

There are a number of traditions that are engaged in such awareness: for example, Buddhism, the Protestant currents of Christianity, post-Freudian psychoanalysis and the psychotherapies it has informed, and no doubt others of which I am not aware. To my knowledge there is only one such tradition that articulates such awareness into political and social philosophy, thus explicitly harnessing a conception of citizenship to one
of individuality. This is the tradition of civil philosophy (Hunter, 2000; and see also Hunter, 2001) associated with early modern thinkers such as Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Bodin, and Pufendorf. It is not that such thinkers discount the role of religion in human affairs but that they refuse a transcendent ground for the organization of such affairs. Later thinkers like Hegel, Nietzsche, Weber, and Durkheim can be seen as developing the tradition of civil philosophy. It is the explicit use of the idea of self-preservation as a foundation stone for civil philosophy that makes the seventeenth century thinkers in this group so interesting. If we look backwards from the vantage point of contemporary post-Freudian explorations of the self, I think that we can see more clearly the importance and significance of the idea of self-preservation in early modern civil philosophy.

In what follows, I present first the idea of self-preservation as I am able to construct it given my historical vantage point. I then explain this vantage point by discussing the post-Freudian account of the self as offered in the object relations approach associated with Winnicott and those he has influenced. Then I turn to seventeenth century civil philosophy and discuss how the idea of self-preservation underpinned a conception of the state as the sovereign power by means of which civil peace could be established, and self-preservation made as secure as it is possible for it to be. I then offer some concluding remarks.

The Idea of Self-preservation

The idea of self-preservation turns on the valuing of each human being as a self. In order to be a self, the human being has to be alive in both the organic and the subjective senses of being alive. Thus valuing each human being as a self means valuing whatever conduces to the quality of being alive of the self as an embodied subject.

This question is neglected in all the traditions of thinking about the human subject that split off what is seen as the profane nature of embodiment from the subjective capacity of mind, thus creating a situation where mind assumes a transcendent relationship to the organic conditions of human life. When human embodiment is viewed in the form of drives that compromise the human subject’s capacity to attend to the claims of mind, the organic dimension of human life, and it follows life itself, must fall not just into neglect but into disrepute. There are three consequences that follow from this. When embodiment is split off from mind, it is inevitable that mind assume an other-worldly quality and point of anchorage. The ordinariness of what it means to tend to human life, that of self and of others, falls off the radar and there is a disdain for the quotidian earthly realities of human life both in the singular and in the plural. Second, as feminist critique especially has made clear, those who as human subjects are viewed as unable to bracket the claims of their organic being in favor of life of the mind—notably babies, women, and those who as slaves are deputed to be the custodians of their masters’ embodied being—are positioned as of another and inferior order of being to those who can follow the life of the mind. Third, when mind is understood as somehow transcendent in relation to embodiment, it is all too easy to demand of those human subjects who can follow the life of the mind that they sacrifice their profane aspect of being to this transcendent aspect of their being (as in monastic asceticism of one kind or another and, at the outer limit of such sacrifice, the giving up of one’s earthly life in order to ensure one’s “life” in a world beyond).

The thoroughly this-worldly, earthly, quotient, ordinary quality of what is involved in bringing self-preservation into awareness is of considerable significance. It denotes a deliberate emphasis on the quality of life of human subjects in this world and on the
importance of designing and building a world where the dignity of the individual human being in being born into, living, and exiting the only life that is theirs assumes the status of a primary value.

Given the prominence of systems of thought that accord primacy to the transcendent, it is surely extraordinary when a counter-movement in thought occurs, and the human being as the integer of the human species is accorded the status of a self. Such a counter-movement is seventeenth century civil philosophy. As Kriegel (2002, pp. 16–17) makes clear, when the human being is valued as a self, this means that it is no longer acceptable to require the sacrifice of the human being in the interest of the group, to enslave the human being, to treat the human being as a thing, or as property. These other ways of constituting the status or lack of status of human beings are endemic in the history of human societies. It might be said that we are insufficiently curious about them because we are insufficiently curious about what is involved in constituting the human being as a subject who is a self. Self-preservation is an idea that is difficult to open up because in today’s world that is shaped, at least rhetorically, by the value of self-preservation in the form of human rights discourse, the elision from “self” to the human being as such (the human being considered simply as an integer of the human species) is all too easy. There is also a motivated interest in shrouding the question of how it is a human being becomes and is sustained as a self with opacity so that the rhetoric of human rights can be asserted without making any parallel effort to implement this commitment.

Once examined, the idea of self-preservation can be seen to denote a set of relationships that bring together (a) what is involved in the subject being alive as a self, (b) what is involved in the subject being a self in the “live company” (Alvarez, 2002) of other selves, and (c) what it is that others, both as particular selves and as a political society of selves, have to do in order that the status claim to be a self is made possible. Freedom is intrinsic to the idea of self-preservation for the claim to be a self centers on the notion that one should be free to engage in life in one’s own way so that one’s life becomes one’s own. The term self-preservation highlights what usually goes unremarked: the intrinsic coupling of freedom and life.

The Post-Freudian Account of the Subject as a Self in the “Live Company” of Other Selves

The individualism that I see as the substance of citizenship is simple in one respect: namely, the constitution of each human being as worthy of the status of individual. It is because the human being is constituted as an individual (a “self”) that s/he is obligated to preserve him(her)self and other subjects as selves. What is it to be constituted and valued as a self? It is to be invited to assume a presence in social life as a subject who is free to initiate explorations of its unique being as a self in relation to the opportunities for such exploration that its object world (other selves, and things) presents. For the human being to take up this invitation to assume presence as a self in a world shared with other selves, s/he has to acquire a sense of self. To become present as a self means that the human being has to be organized in such a way that s/he is a center of subjective experience, and thus, can reflexively recognize his or her experience as his/her own. The achievement of such psychic-somatic organization as a self is what Winnicott (1971 [1991], p. 70) calls “unit status”. It is on this basis that the subject develops the capacity to live creatively, to engage with the world as a set of possibilities for the articulation of one’s unique being, and thus
to live as it were out of one’s own experience. There is nothing automatic about a human being achieving unit status. For this to occur, the human being has to live within a world that values living life on one’s own terms and in one’s own way, and that offers both support for and facilitation of this way of being.

For Winnicott unit status refers to the achievement of existence as an integrated center of subjective and somatic experience. Like other post-Kleinian psychoanalytic thinkers, Winnicott proposes that the earliest developmental experiences of individual agency reside in “the imaginative elaboration of somatic parts, feelings, and functions, that is of physical aliveness” (Winnicott, 1858 [1992], p. 244). Here is Winnicott (1858 [1992], p. 244) on this process:

Gradually the psyche and the soma aspects of the growing person become involved in a process of mutual interrelatation. This interrelating of the psyche with the soma constitutes an early phase of individual development. At a later stage the live body, with its limits, and with an inside and an outside, is felt by the individual to form the core for the imaginative self. The development to this stage is extremely complex, and although this development may possibly be fairly complete by the time a baby has been borne a few days, there is a vast opportunity for distortion of the natural course of development in these respects. Moreover what applies to very early stages also applies to some extent to all stages, even to the stage that we call adult maturity.

The developmental trajectory of the human being as a self never stops. The biography of the self is a dynamic process through time where the historical temporality of human action intersects with the organic temporality of the human life course. There are many distinct points of reckoning at which the self has to struggle to achieve a new modus operandi as a subject for whom his/her live body forms the core for his/her imaginative self.

Winnicott (and those influenced by him) emphasizes the contingency of the achievement of unit status. While he acknowledges there may be a constitutional factor that predisposes the baby to achieve or not achieve unit status, by far the greater weight he gives to whether he calls the maternal environment of care of the baby facilitates this achievement or not. If the baby is to achieve unit status, it has to achieve first a sense of “continuity of being” (Winnicott, 1965 [1990], p. 54) which is possible only if it receives care from a mother (an adult who offers maternal care) who is sufficiently in tune with her infant’s idiosyncratic needs that the infant does not suffer what Winnicott calls “impingements of being”. Such impingements interrupt the process of integration or self-organization as an individual embodied subject:

With “the care that it receives from its mother” each infant is able to have a personal existence, and so begins to build up what might be called a continuity of being. On the basis of this continuity of being the inherited potential gradually develops into an individual infant. If maternal care is not good enough then the infant does not really come into existence, since there is no continuity of being; instead the personality becomes built on the basis of reactions to environmental impingement. (Winnicott, 1965 [1990], p. 54, emphasis in the original)

Winnicott’s account of the constitution of the self is a relational account: the self can be only if its coming into being is actively facilitated by a mature subject who knows enough
of what it is to be a self to do this. More than this: Winnicott is fully aware that a good enough “facilitating environment” can be in place only if the person providing maternal care is adequately supported in this role, and the wider societal-cultural environment values human beings as individuals.\(^5\)

If the person is to be free in the sense of free to engage in creative living as distinct from compliance (with what others seem to require of one), Winnicott emphasizes that first one has to feel that one exists, and we might add, that others think it is okay for one to exist as a being in one’s own right. As he (1986, p. 39) puts it, “Creativity . . . is the doing that arises out of being. It indicates that he who is, is alive”. He (p. 41) elaborates: “By creative living I mean not getting killed or annihilated all the time by compliance or by reacting to the world that impinges; I mean seeing everything afresh all the time”. His conception of creative living involves a theory of self-exploration through play where the individual actively projects her phantasy onto the object (another person or thing) in such a way as to create possibilities for the object’s existence that were not there before and where also the constraints of the object’s reality have to be reckoned with. Christopher Bollas develops this conception of creative living in the idea of “self experiencing”. Self-experiencing is the process by which a self explores its possibilities of articulation by means of its use of objects (both other selves and things). Bollas (1993, p. 17) links the congruence of “fit” between object use and self-expression to a sense of joy in being alive:

Certain objects, like psychic “keys”, open doors to unconsciously intense—and rich—experience in which we articulate the self that we are through the elaborating character of our response. This selection constitutes the jouissance of the true self, a bliss released through the finding of specific objects that free idiom to its articulation.

Bollas emphasizes that freedom to engage in “self experiencing cannot be assumed”. Individuals whose sense of self is organized in terms of reactive defense against impingement are likely to seek to control the object rather than to risk being transformed in a dialectic of engagement with the object (see Bollas, 1993, p. 31). For Bollas points out that if the self is to be free to “use” the object as an opportunity for self-articulation, then the self has to be open to discovery of the integrity of the object, to being, as he puts it, “played” by the object.

For Bollas and Winnicott the potential for individuality is there in each human being but whether it gets articulated depends on whether it is evoked and facilitated by another subject or subjects. Bollas (1989, p. 9) puts the point clearly:

A genetically biased set of dispositions, the true self exists before object relating. It is only a potential, however, because it depends upon maternal care for its evolution. As its gestural expressions and intersubjective claims are never free of the other’s interpretation, its evolution depends upon the mother’s and father’s facilitations. No human being, however, is only true self. Each inherited disposition meets up with the actual world and one of the outcomes of this dialectic between personality idiom and human culture is psychic life.

It is for this reason that when Bollas refers to “the idiom of the person” he is not suggesting some notion of a latent individuality that already exists prior to its worldly articulations:
The idiom of the person is not . . . a hidden script tucked away in the library of the unconscious waiting for revelation through the word. It is more a set of unique person possibilities specific to this individual and subject in its articulation to the nature of lived experience in the actual world. (Bollas, 1989, p. 9)

In this psychoanalytic account, self-preservation, the seventeenth century idea, I am proposing can be discovered again, but this time as a fully articulated theory of the self. In this theory, it is clear that one can be free only if one has achieved worldly existence as self in the company of other selves. It is clear also that such achievement is contingent on adequate facilitation and support, and, we may add, it is fragile. It can be seriously derailed by trauma (see Golomb, 2003; Varvin, 2003; Welsh-Jouve, 2003), and trauma is as much an intentional human artifact as is a good-enough facilitating environment and the wider world on which it depends. Self-preservation as a value should no more be taken for granted in our present than it was by those in the seventeenth century who argued that this value should be at the center of social and political organization. Let us turn now to brief consideration of their thinking.

**Self-preservation and the *Res Publica* in Seventeenth Century Civil Philosophy**

Perhaps the most radical aspect of seventeenth century political thought of the kind that Hunter terms civil philosophy, Kriegel (2002) “republican”, and Skinner (1998) “neo-Roman”—thought associated with the likes of Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, and Bodin—is that what Hobbes (1968, p. 160) calls “the felicity of this life” was made of central importance. The common good (or, common weal) is understood in terms of a shared interest in self-preservation. The rationale for all authority including domestic authority, and especially for the authority of the state, is that it is required to function on behalf of securing the self-preservation of those subject to authority. It is difficult to appreciate the radical innovation such thought represented if we do not understand that its commitment to the inner-worldly survival and well-being of the individual human being was driven by an abhorrence of the destruction attendant upon a hundred years of religious wars. These were thinkers all too aware of how conflicts of faith (“values”, as they are called today) can create a situation of a chronic “state of war”. Their emphasis fell on natural law (God’s will as revealed in a natural order discernible by the exercise of reason) rather than on the revealed will of God, because revelation was necessarily mediated by faith which fostered zealotry and intolerance (see Hunter, 2000, p. 611).

The question turned on how to produce a this-worldly or civil order that could be reconciled with the subjectivism of faith. At the same time these (largely Protestant) thinkers worked with a conception of the equality of human beings as divinely created. Accordingly, they attempted to offer an account of civil order that could function on behalf of the self-preservation of each human being in such a way as to leave each free to think/profess for them selves. For these thinkers the state is society as it is “organised for the good life, the general interest of the common good” (Kriegel, 2002, p. 14). As the sovereign power, the state is the basis of this organization and as such it supplies an authoritative public containment for the subjective dynamics of society. It is the state that turns the natural (divinely created) right to self-preservation into a civil reality. Durkheim (1957 [1992], p. 60) grasped the logic of this idea clearly: “History seems indeed to prove that the State was not created to prevent the individual from being disturbed in the exercise
of his natural rights: no, this was not its role alone—rather it is the State that creates and organizes and makes a reality of these rights”. Thus civil society and political society are co-constitutive aspects of the state conceived as a positive ethical framework for the status of the person (this is the state conceived as “ethical life” by Hegel in *The Philosophy of Right*). This is why in the *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke makes the construction of “civil society” and “political society” simultaneous.

For the state to function in this way it has to be “the state ruled by law” (Kriegel, 2002, p. 14): “The republic, or state ruled by law—we could also define it as the state whose legitimacy derives from a society organized for the good life, the general interest of the common good—confers a decisive role on law”. Kriegel (2002, p. 15) further explains how radical this conception of sovereign power is in its conception of (to use Hegelian language) the human being as a subject of right:

Feudalism is war, *jus vitae necisque* [the right of life and death], conscription of human life; sovereign power is peace, security and prohibition of the taking of human life. Sovereign power substitutes law for force and order for death. It consists of a powerful constraint on the Roman *patriae potestas*, on the right to determine who should live and who shall die. It pacifies society, guarantees individual security and makes the maintenance of life its chief aim.

Kriegel (2002, p. 16) shows how the construction of legal personality for the individual as the subject of right involves, for thinkers like Locke, Bodin and Pufendorf, a deliberate rejection of historically available legal conceptions that made it possible for human beings to be enslaved, treated like things, or conceived as patrimonial/feudal property. What these older conceptions have in common is the idea of patrimonial right where the ruler (either of the household, the kingdom, or the empire) is both entitled and obliged to secure the patrimony of the household, kingdom or empire, and to do so by a mix of force, command, and custom. Where empire prevails, patrimonial authority is used as the basis for the domestic ordering of relationships, but it takes on the status of second fiddle to the imperial center which arrogates to itself a unilateral and thus lawless right to assert its own power to control, command, exploit and dominate. It is the nature of empire to destroy so far as it exists the idea of the status of the human being as a subject of right for empire will not accept any limitation on its power to use and destroy human and other animate beings as it sees as necessary in order to secure and extend its power.

Empire and patrimonial authority are modes of organizing power the legitimacy of which is radically called into question when the idea of self-preservation is invoked as the principled basis from which to think about social organization and political authority. In making historical reference to early modern thought, my intention is not to suggest a narrative of progress for the triumph of the state as *res publica* over empire and patrimonial authority. Our contemporary experience suggests that awareness of why we need a state, and of how we need to lend our action to making the state possible, is never achieved once and for all. It has to be struggled for at different times and in different contexts, and the alternative principles of empire and patrimonial authority for how the human subject understands itself and organizes its relationships are always on offer.

Pre-emptive unilateral aggression, or domination over others so that their agency gives further potency to one’s own, must seem a rational line of action to take by a subject who fears that if he does not take such defensive action then he is in no position to do what
he needs to secure his self-preservation. It is precisely in order to foreclose private arrogation of the power of war and death that the monopoly of force and punishment is given to the state ruled by law. As public authority the state is necessarily sovereign. Kriegel (2002, p. 15) cites Bodin on this point: “Supreme power, as Bodin defined it, is also, as Loyseau emphasized the very essence of the state: ‘Sovereignty is the form which gives being to the state; it is inseparable from the state; without it, the state vanishes’”. As it also follows that in order to secure their individual right to self-preservation, “Men” are compelled to create an artificial and institutional order that makes it possible for their divinely endowed status to be actually recognized. Thus, “nature” in this conception cannot be adequate to itself. It demands that human agents use their capacity to think about the conditions of their situation as subjects of right to build an institutional and interpersonal order that makes it possible for right to be not just a principled possibility but an actuality.

Concluding Remarks

I have attempted here to do no more than propose an idea of citizenship as centering on the idea of the human being as an individual entitled to enjoy the status of the person, a status, I have insisted, that involves securing what the early modern civil philosophers called self-preservation. In suggesting that we can develop this idea with reference to a more complete idea of the self that we find in post-Freudian object relations theory, I am not suggesting that we can map contemporary ways of thinking about the person directly onto that we find in seventeenth century civil philosophy. I am simply insisting on the integument between individuality, aliveness and thus life, and freedom.

Notes

1 Here I think of this part of Hegel’s preface to The Philosophy of Right: “The truth concerning right, ethics and the state is at any rate as old as its exposition in public laws and in public morality and religion. What more does this truth require, inasmuch as the thinking mind [Geist] is not content to possess it in this proximate manner? What it needs is to be comprehended as well, so that the content with is already rational in itself may also gain a rational form and thereby appear justified to free thinking. For such thinking does not stop at what is given, whether the latter is supported by the external positive authority of the state or of mutual agreement among human beings, or by the authority of inner feeling and the heart and by the testimony of the spirit which immediately concurs with this, but starts out from itself and thereby demands to know itself as united in its innermost being with the truth” (Hegel, 1991, p. 11).

2 The distinction between awareness and consciousness is foundational to many practices of self-education such as Buddhism or the Feldenkrais method of somatic education. There is an interesting transcript of a conversation between the biophysicist Katchalsky and Moshe Feldenkrais that explores this distinction which contains this statement of Katchalsky (Ginsberg, 2006, p. 4) in summarizing the results of earlier conversation: “We accepted that what is true in knowledge are the concepts and the lawful correlations of concepts. But then you claimed that knowledge itself is not the same as awareness, not part of a [true] human reality. You spoke of Knowledge that is dead, for example, the knowledge that is buried in books. We can have a library full of knowledge but we cannot consider it as awareness. And so you brought as an example of this distinction, and I believe a good one, that I can come across this chair millions of times and I have an impression of it, and yet I don’t have awareness. That is because if you ask me how many slats there are in the back of this chair, I may not be able to answer. On the other hand if I concentrate my mind to rebuild its image and then answer you as to how many slats comprise the back of the chair, we have another element, but a very important one. This element turns consciousness into awareness.”
3 I use “object” in the sense used by object relations theorist. For such a one as Bollas, it refers to any object that presents itself for use by the subject as an opportunity for the articulation of his or her sense of self. See, for example, this passage by Bollas (1989, p. 10): “The idiom that we are finds its expression through the choices and uses of objects that are available to it in the environment. If the mother knows her infant, if she senses his figural intentions, his gestures expressive of need and desire, she will provide objects (including herself) to serve as experiential elaborators of his personality potential. In this way, she assists the struggle to establish self.”

4 Melanie Klein is the post-Freudian psychoanalytic thinker who establishes the interrelationship of the instinctual and imaginative components of human imagination. In perhaps the definitive Kleinian view of “phantasy” (the mediation of the soma by the psyche) Susan Isaacs (1989, p. 83) declares: “Phantasy is (in the first instance) the mental corollary, the psychic representative, of instinct. There is no impulse, no instinctual urge or response which is not experienced as unconscious phantasy”.

5 Winnicott does not elaborate much on either of these points. Regarding the second of these see Winnicott (1986, pp. 56–57) and consider this statement (Winnicott, 1971 [1991], p. 70) which is congruent with the view I offer in this paper: “One could suppose that before a certain era, say a thousand years ago, only a few people lived creatively . . . To explain this one would have to say that before a certain date it is possible that there was only very exceptionally a man or woman who achieved unit status in personal development. Before a certain date the vast millions of the world of human beings quite possibly never found or certainly soon lost at the end of infancy or childhood their sense of being individuals.”

6 I am indebted for this idea of the state as offering containment (in the psychoanalytic sense) for subjective experience to Paul Hoggett.

7 Locke (1967, p. 324, emphasis in the original) follows the passage cited above with: “Whereby it is easy to discern who are, and who are not, in Political Society together. Those who are united into one Body, and have a common establish’d Law and Judicature to appeal to, with Authority to decide Controversies between them, and punish Offenders, are in Civil Society one with another; but those who have no such common Appeal, I mean on Earth, are still in the state of Nature, each being, where there is no other, Judge for himself, and Executioner; which is . . . the perfect state of Nature.”

References


