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Psychoanalysis and the Challenge of Educational Fantasies

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Education—of all sorts—is suffused with fantasies.[1] This is no revelation to anyone involved in the activity, at whatever level, yet as a subject relatively little scholarly attention has been directed by educationalists at elucidating its nature. The most sustained reflections on the nature of fantasy stem from psychoanalysis, which argues that the totality of mental life is governed by unconscious phantasies, many of which are unknowable. This renders everyday notions of reality problematic and challenges both mainstream and alternative education in its epistemic claims. The present chapter aims to contribute to an understanding of fantasy, particularly fantasies of education, by drawing on work from four psychoanalytic schools, those of Freud, Klein, Winnicott and Lacan. Such multiplicity of perspectives both reflects the broad range of contemporary psychoanalysis, each with an array of conceptual tools, and offers

[1] As a term, fantasy has been spelled with either an "f" or a "ph," depending on either the psychoanalytic school that uses it or the topographical position of the fantasies being considered. Both spellings will be employed here.

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important balanced access to the discipline's profound study of subjectivity within which fantasy bridges both the conscious and unconscious mind.

Education and Reality

Since Plato's metaphor of the cave, much of Western education and thought has, superficially at least, embraced rationality and enlightenment ideals and sought to dispel illusion and fantasy. Psychoanalysis problematizes this. The notion of deferred action, originating with Freud's trauma theory, underscores a non-linear approach to memory, epistemology and determinism. In *Studies on Hysteria* (Breuer & Freud, 1955), which Freud co-authored with Joseph Breuer, hysteria—as well as neurotic states more generally—were hypothesised as originating from actual childhood trauma, typically of a sexual nature. Freud saw such childhood sexual abuse as becoming increasingly traumatic *after* the event(s), often following maturation when the actual nature of the other party's intention and behaviour became increasingly interpretable to the subject within an expanded frame of reference. This delayed impact formed the basis of Freud's concept of *nachträglichkeit*, translated into the English literature as deferred action and into the French as *après-coup*, and is one of the mechanisms that distinguish psychoanalysis from other models of the mind that rely on simple linear determinism. Instead, Freud emphasised the stratified nature of the self, with memory being plastic and subject to later revision, such latter iterations infusing memories with new meaning and potentially pathogenic potential. Not all memories, however, are seen as equally subject to deferred action; the process relates particularly to those impressions that are inchoate and cannot be assimilated into the individual's existing frame of understanding (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1973).

More radically, the unconscious challenges what we may believe about self and others. Our access to unconscious phantasies (and thus thinking) is limited to their derivatives; however, Kleinian psychoanalysts and others have emphasised that our epistemophilic instinct is driven by these phantasies into exploring worlds the meanings of which symbolically originates from basic phantasies and curiosity about the body and our interiority. Here phantasy (equivalent to dreaming) is understood as a continuous and vitally necessary mental process. Simple binaries between subjective and objective, internal and external worlds thus require more careful exploration. Unconscious phantasy fosters the development of logical thinking as phantasies get tested against reality, a process that fuels educational enquiry.

Curiosity, Anxiety and Learning

The mother's body, and particularly its mysterious interior, corresponds roughly to the child's locus of curiosity (according to the classical Freudian position), constituted as it was through the operation of consciously articulable phantasy, which remitted gradually with the subject's increasing knowledge and adaptation to reality. In Britain, however, the inner world of unconscious "phantasy" (spelled as such particularly by Kleinian psychoanalysts to distinguish it from the more everyday potentially conscious fantasy), its objects constituted partly through internalisation of imagos, came to be seen as qualitatively different; continuously active, concrete, dynamic, primitive and without serious susceptibility to adaptation to external reality. Melanie Klein and Ronald Fairbairn largely independently contributed to this distinctive conceptualisation; a rich inner world both saw as beset with anxieties and phantasies. The most accessible Kleinian clarification about the nature of unconscious phantasies came from the psychoanalyst and educationalist Susan Isaacs (1948), her ground-breaking paper on the subject describing unconscious phantasy as primarily about the body and that it is "the mental corollary, the psychic representative of instinct p. 81."

In *The Psychoanalysis of Children* (1932/1980) Melanie Klein, drawing on Freud's (1926/1959) ideas about early anxiety situations, argues that when phantasies of the hostile "combined parental figure" predominate in the mind, a boy's infantile castration anxiety can involve terror of having the penis not only castrated but also retained within the mother's body. This lack of a signifying "corpse" inevitably inhibits mourning. Klein contends that inhibitions in psycho-social development can result from such phantasies. Here Klein followed Freud's views on phobias as a phenomenon generated by phallic level castration anxieties, consequent to sadism, longing and exploratory curiosity (the epistemophilic instinct) directed towards the mother-and-her-insides, its primary object. Transposition onto external world objects and situations through progressive symbolic equations, Klein (1930/1985) argues, occurs as the epistemophilic instinct's original object becomes overly saturated with inhibiting persecutory anxiety. The external world thus becomes an attenuated substitute source for epistemophilic conquest and gratification, motivated by degrees of frustration (or primary anxiety) within the inner world.

Curiosity and learning, particularly of a self-directed kind, thus stem from an individual's earliest preoccupations and phantasies, wherein appropriation and exploration of imaginal landscapes (first the mother's body, then the outside world—its partly undifferentiated extension) facilitates the development of symbolic relations to these terrains and to reality. Such phantasy can be

regarded as a motor for education and intellectual development. Conversely, a lack of inner-focussed anxiety, particularly when combined with marked anxiety about destructiveness, can stifle development, a thesis Klein illustrated with material from her patient, Dick. His extreme inhibition and autistic-like withdrawal manifested his mentally taking "refuge in the phantasies of the dark, empty mother's body" (Klein, 1930/1985, p. 227) after depositing its fearful contents along with his own destructiveness into the outside world. Phantasy here constitutes an aspect of mental mechanisms and where aggression provokes anxiety defences against this can inhibit development.

In *Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms* (1946/1984) Klein depicts the key mental mechanism of "projective identification" primarily as an unconscious phantasy in which sadistic omnipotent intrusion *into* the object is occasioned by means of "harmful excrements, expelled in hatred [together with] split-off parts of the ego…[intended] not only to injure but also to control and to take possession of the object" (Klein, 1946/1984, p. 8). One result of this type of primitive phantasy is a loss of the subjective capacity to differentiate between self and object, in other words, identity confusion. More generally, we can see this primitive process as implicated both in many conceptual and interpersonal difficulties common in educational contexts and in less extreme varieties within students' efforts to understand and get *into* a topic, wherein for instance, trial identifications, the exploration of character and plot, anthropomorphic and imaginative activities might be common.

The shadow side of unconscious phantasy is resistance, the wish not to know, and at an extreme the active attacks on thought (technically, on linking), as discussed by Wilfred Bion, which inhibit educational processes as students turn back towards preferred sequestered phantasies, often of an omnipotent nature. Post-Kleinian developments in psychoanalysis have been profoundly influenced by the work of Bion. Early in his career, Bion was an unsuccessful teacher in a minor British public school before his later incarnation in psychoanalysis within which his teaching was regarded as inspirational by many—and deranged by a few. As phantasies require a stage on which to be played out, notions of imagined space for Bion are crucial. In his theory of thinking, Bion emphasises the affective origins of thought in which the capacity to think develops as a means of dealing with our earliest experiences ("thoughts"), a process assisted by—among other things—the level of a person's capacity for frustration tolerance (*cf.* Mischel, 2014) and the mental abilities of caregivers (including, by extension, teachers) to soothe and clarify events in a timely manner. Based substantially on his pioneering work analysing severely disturbed patients, Bion elaborated the mental processes of pathological splitting and massive projective identification resorted to in primitive

attempts to ward off anticipated unbearable psychological breakdown. As part of this development, Bion distinguished between: (1) pathological forms of projective identification, characterised by the degree of hatred and omnipotence involved, the evacuatory intent and splitting which amounts to fragmentation; and (2) more normal varieties, which carry primitive communicative intent (Bion, 1959, 1962, 1962/1984). Bion was thus able to move from a consideration of the severe psychopathology of the psychoses to a view of normal mental development, both of which hinged upon the ways in which frustrating, painful and inchoate feelings are relocated through projective processes. In normal development, projections of such feelings are contained prototypically within the infant's mother, made understandable by virtue of the operation of her developed psychological capacities on them, and are in due course re-introjected by the infant; such meaning-conferring cycles leading incrementally to the internalisation and growth of an apparatus for thinking or digesting thoughts. At its most prosaic, an understanding of this process may be discerned in a parent trying to clarify and articulate in spoken language what their infant may be experiencing and wanting, a process of wording the infant to itself and gradually transforming the *infans* into a toddler who is increasingly able to enter the symbolic realm of language.

Education and the Interpersonal

In developing these ideas, Bion highlighted the crucial role of the interpersonal environment and, at the same time, offered a conceptual model for the analytic encounter based on processes of containment and transformation. Here, it is the developed capacities for thought, particularly for what Bion terms *reverie, alpha-function* or *dreaming* (concepts that we may here see as substantially interchangeable: see Grotstein, 2009), that allow stereotypically the infant's mother—but also teachers and others—to both witness and assist the other in the painful and uncertain process of learning from emotional experience. Both these processes and the model equally offer new ways of conceptualising education and the teaching relationship, underlining both its profound transformative potential and helping clarify widespread defences against learning. These ideas have been helpfully articulated in relation to education by various writers, including Alcorn (2010, 2011, 2013), Archangelo (2007, 2010, 2014; Archangelo & Villela, 2012), Bibby (2009), Britzman (2003, 2009) and Mintz (2014).

Further consideration of the imaginative stages on which phantasy is played out may be found in the work of Donald Meltzer, particularly in his notion of

a "compartmentalised life-space" (Meltzer, 1955/1994) and his delineation of a geography of object relationships (Meltzer & Bick, 1960). Thus he writes:

> The geography of the life-space of the child and the unconscious is really in four layers. There is (1) the outside world, (2) the inside of his objects in the outside world, (3) the inside world, and (4) the inside of his objects in the inside world. In order to understand the child's material thoroughly, we must distinguish whether the object relationship we are seeing is going on inside an object or outside it, and whether that field of action is in the inner or outer world. (Meltzer & Bick, 1960, p. 39–40)

Later, Meltzer (Meltzer & Harris, 1976/1994) would add a fifth layer to this geography: the "no-where" of delusional systems. Using these layers, Meltzer describes how anxiety fuelled intellectual inhibitions can occur as a result of relating through phantasies of intrusion into idealised imaginary worlds (Meltzer, 1967). Such phantasy life can envelop individuals, sequestering them from mutual living. Emerging from such phantasy needs a favourable cost-benefit balance between life within the phantasy and that outside it, coupled with "at least one person interested enough to seek him out" (Meltzer & Harris, 1976/1994, p. 408).

Educational contexts at their best may offer both a menu of such encouraging alternatives and figures who are genuinely interested in the emotional and lived-lives of students. While education, particularly for students in certain developmental periods, needs a degree of protection from everyday matters (akin to Erik Erikson's concept of the moratorium), the negative or "shadow side" of education, however, can see this form into a psychic retreat from reality. While they are a powerful adjunct to learning and communication, digital technologies may also facilitate and exacerbate such retreats and social sequestration, fuelling omnipotent and omniscient phantasies. Popular (mis-) conceptions of the university as "an ivory tower" or an "artificial bubble" and the use of the adjective "academic" to imply real-world irrelevance capture some perceptions of education as a phantasy retreat (compartmentalised life space). While such characterisations often principally represent hostile attacks on thinking (Bion, 1959, 1967), fuelled by envy, jealousy and other powerful emotional states, it is important in this context to retain a capacity to reflect on these. In this process, psychological containment and gradual transformation may lead to deeper understanding, re-wording and a capacity to distinguish elements of accurate perception from genuinely hostile attacks on intellectual functioning. Such processes inevitably take time, continuity and human capital with the capacity to sustain reverie or reflective functioning,

resources which are often under pressure within educational settings, particularly those dominated by policies oriented towards narrowly interpreted results, standards and agendas.

Knowledge and Ignorance

Here, the mental attitude of the would-be teacher (mother) is crucial and differs significantly from the formal model of the expert, or the one who is supposed to know (*sujet supposé savoir*, as Jacques Lacan terms it). In *My Teaching*, Lacan problematizes the concept of "knowledge" both in psychoanalytic and educational settings. He suggests that the psychoanalyst must be able to present himself as the one who knows that "he is dependent upon a certain fantasy" (Lacan, 2008, p. 110). In other words, the analyst must be aware that he actually does not know (Lacan, 2008, p. 111). This suggestion highlights how Lacan's three registers—the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real—find a reflection in education. First of all, teaching is maintained to a great extent by recognition. Unless teachers are recognised with their capabilities, the foundations of an effective education are undermined. Teachers are "supposed to know" and sometimes they become ideal figures or role models in the eyes of students. The students have fantasies not only about who the teachers are but also about how their teachers perceive them. Therefore the fantasy of self, the initiation of which begins at the mirror stage according to Lacan, is an indispensable part of any educational environment, referring both to the Imaginary and the Symbolic registers.

Discussing mathematics education Brown (2011) summarizes how social practices and discourses within families or schools determine the way that a subject behaves:

> [Our desire to be looked at by a particular other] starts with the parents naming the child and having in mind some fantasy of who their child might be. The child's actions are gauged against such fantasies, such as responding in particular ways, connecting with family members, fitting in at nursery/school, etc. Later this desire to fit in translates as not appearing to be out of sorts with broader social expectations, such as, behaving in a civil fashion, dressing in particular ways, forming relationships, developing practical skills, reaching certain academic standards, etc. So many of our actions are governed by norms. (Brown, 2011, p. 115)

The words such as "expectations," "standards" and "norms" are often used by parents in families and teachers in educational institutions. Nevertheless, the fantasies that are registered in the Imaginary and the Symbolic are shaped around the resistant Real.

The "fact" of resistance is a natural part of education. The traditional approach tries to find ways to "break" resistance and "tame" any rebellious attitude. This is often enabled by feeding the fantasies of self that are based on the question of how the subject is seen by others. Nevertheless, Lacanian psychoanalysis can provide us with an alternative approach to such resistances. First of all, the Real itself is defined by the terms of resistance: it resists any symbolization. Furthermore, it is associated with impossibility because "it is impossible to imagine, impossible to integrate into the symbolic order" (Evans, 1996, p. 163). In his discussion on mathematics education, Brown (2011) traces the Lacanian Real in the impossibility for everything to mean something. He suggests that "any account of science has an outside" and "reasonable" explanations are not the only ways of "making sense of the world" (2011, p. 123). Another study on student teachers traces the Real in teachers' "anxiety" and "panic" and presents the observation that "the Real-of-teaching" can disrupt its Symbolic order, when student teachers encounter difficulties in classroom management (Brown, Atkinson, & England, 2006, p. 100). In the first case, the idealisation of the knowledgeable subject—teacher and student—and so the fantasies revolving around this idealisation are disrupted, while in the second case, anxiety and panic damage the image of the teacher who is expected to have control over him/herself and the classroom.

These examples show that Lacanian psychoanalysis presents an alternative approach to education first and foremost with its "Freudian" emphasis on "a foreign body of knowledge," which is the unconscious (Cho, 2009, p. 75). The unconscious is repressed, traumatic and includes elements that cannot be symbolized. For that reason, knowledge and ignorance, mastery and loss of control, unity and fragments, teaching and learning may cease to posit themselves as simple binaries. In this approach to education, traces (the indescribable sense that something is happening there) become effective tools of teaching rather than a clear understanding (*cf.* Lacan, 2008, p. 62).

Education and Transitional Space

From the perspective of the British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott, play and transitional space are crucial phenomena for the teacher as well as students. Winnicott, like Freud, saw fantasy as relating to both the conscious

and unconscious mind, though his distinctive emphasis was on fantasy and behaviour that bridged subjective and objective, internal and external worlds, phenomena that were essentially transitional (Winnicott, 1953/1971a). For Winnicott (1963/1965), the trajectory of development was from infantile states characterised by narcissism *towards* independence (a never achieved end-state), with transitional phenomena and fantasy facilitating a maturational unfolding at the individual's own pace. Fantasy and play (the two terms being closely related) within this space, Winnicott argued, promoted the development of an integrated frame of reference, with personal meaning and identity slowly emerging. Interference with this process, whether from inept analytic interpretation or familial, educational or other environmental sources, risked derailing the subject's authentic going-on-being and replacing it with varying degrees of inauthentic false-self behaviour. As an intermediate area of experiencing, transitional objects and phenomena occupy a space "between the thumb and the teddy bear, between…oral eroticism and the true object relationship" (Winnicott, 1953/1971a, p. 2), within which fantasy and play occur fuelled by both inner reality and external life, allowing the interrelationship of one with the other. Importantly, Winnicott emphasises that the phenomena of the neutral area of *potential space* should be unchallenged from a binary perspective (e.g., did you create this or did you find it?). The illusory experience should instead remain protected and untrammelled by such intrusive questions: "the essential feature in the concept…is *the paradox, and the acceptance of the paradox*: the baby creates the object, but the object was there waiting to be created and to become a cathected object" (Winnicott (1969/1971d) p. 89). While Winnicott saw such experience as typical of infancy, he also saw its continuity in adult life, particularly in phenomena such as religion, the arts, cultural life and creativity, including the world of work (Winnicott, 1953/1971a; 1967/1971b; *cf.* Freud, 1908/1955).

Within education, Winnicott (1964a) argued for nursery workers and early years practitioners to provide a space that was more an extension "upwards" of the home, rather than "downwards" of the school, wherein the protection and facilitation of fantasy and play was prioritised. Here, recognition should also be given to the developmental immaturity of the child and the varying quality of their home environments. Winnicott argued for the latter to be addressed in educational settings on the basis of a quasi-diagnostic activity (Winnicott, 1964b). In later schooling, in formal settings, Winnicott suggested that processes akin to weaning and the development of reality testing took place as maturation and socialization occurred and lead to attenuated forms of play and fantasy. Such developments, Winnicott argued (in the context of the 1968 student activism), required teachers and the wider

environment to perform a dialectical role vis-à-vis students involving confrontation that is both personal and robust, yet non-retaliatory and non-vindictive. Such responses provide containment whilst the young strive to alter society (Winnicott, 1968/1971c).

With aggression being part of fantasy at all stages, Winnicott highlighted the infant and older individual's need for its object to survive its destructive attacks both in fantasy and in enactment. Such survival, without descent into persecutory retaliatory states, he saw as a prerequisite for the developing individual's capacity to "use" objects rather than "relating" to them. Here, Winnicott emphasised how love for a real object co-exists with the constant destruction of the same object in *unconscious* fantasy, its actual survival helping to: (1) delimit the subject's fantasies of destructive omnipotence; (2) create opportunities for reparative initiatives; and (3) act as a reassurance about the strength of love and concern. Such ideas radically challenge education, particularly formal varieties, within which prompt obedience, compliance and relating by means of normative identifications are encouraged as part of a hidden curriculum more than potentially troublesome authenticity and creativity.

Education, Repression and Alienation

After Freud abandoned the affect trauma or seduction theory as his primary hypothesis, he gave phantasy a more central role. This, according to Steiner (2003), was Freud's revolutionary discovery. This model (the personal development of which can be traced in Freud's letters to his friend Wilhelm Fliess) can be particularly important for education since Freud emphasises the link between children's unconscious sexual phantasies and their later life. Speculating that "it is only later experiences that give the impetus to phantasies, which then hark back to childhood" (Masson, 1985, p. 265), Freud underlines both the role of people (such as parents and teachers) in children's lives and that of knowledge/insight in maintaining mental health.

Freud's *central usage* of the concept of phantasy situates it as formed under the impetus of "an unconscious wish that is blocked from fulfilment, and the phantasy is a disguised expression and partial fulfilment of this unconscious wish" (Spillius, 2001, p. 362). One of Freud's best-known theories, the Oedipus complex, illustrates this. Situating this as a "universal event" of early childhood (Masson, 1985, p. 272), Freud hypothesises that the power of the classic Greek tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*, lies in the fact that it lets the audience recognise their own childhood phantasies which had been repressed (Masson, 1985, p. 272). Later, in *The Ego and the Id* (1923/1961), Freud elaborates

how the little boy's phantasy of replacing his father results in an ambivalent relationship between father and son. In Freud's words, "At a very early age the little boy develops an object-cathexis for his choice on the anaclitic model; the boy deals with his father by identifying himself with him" (Freud, 1923/1961, p. 31). However, when the boy's sexual wishes for his mother intensify in time, he perceives his father as an obstacle and wants to get rid of him in order to take his place. According to Freud, "the normal" dissolution of the Oedipus complex requires the boy to give up object-cathexis for his mother and intensify his identification with his father. Since Freud relates the Oedipus complex and its dissolution with the development of the super-ego, concepts such as morality, conscience, sense of guilt and social sense enter into the scene. More broadly, we might link this type of structuring phantasy with the development of the capacity to think and to conceptions of law.

While the father, with whom the child is expected to identify, is an ego-ideal, the ambiguous situation of the father in the Oedipus complex also suggests to the child that "you may not do all that he [father] does" (Freud, 1923/1961), p. 34. It is at this point that Freud clarifies the relationship between the phantasies that result in the Oedipus complex and the child's social life, including education:

> The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego later on—in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt. (Freud, 1923/1961, p. 34)

This observation suggests that the origin of the ego ideal goes back to the Oedipus complex and the conflicts between the ego and the ego ideal mark the opposite poles of "real" and "psychical" or "the external" and "the internal" world (Freud, 1923/1961).

Tracing the functions of these two worlds in Freud's conceptualization of phantasy, Laplanche and Pontalis (2003) suggest that the opposition between them constitute a location for the world of phantasy. Satisfaction is attained through illusion (wish fulfilment) in the internal world, while the external world is guided by the reality principle. Thus the unconscious seems to "inherit the patient's original world, which was solely subject to the pleasure principle" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2003, p. 109). This "original world" covers the activity of "phantasying," which is subordinated to the pleasure principle (Freud, 1911/1958). For Freud, formal education resists the pleasure principle and

strives to substitute the reality principle by helping the process of ego development: "To this end it makes use of an offer of love as a reward from the educators; and it therefore fails if a spoilt child thinks that it possesses that love in any case and cannot lose it whatever happens" (Freud, 1911/1958, p. 224). This positioning of education, however, was no endorsement. Given Freud's strong general thesis on the unhealthy repression entailed by contemporary civilisation and the cost of this in subsequent suffering and neurosis, he situated traditional education as a repressive agency and saw psychoanalysis as one means of *after-education*, that might undo some of the harm initial education had produced (Britzman, 2003, 2009).

For Freud, education was a repressive social system fuelled by narcissistic and other phantasies that demanded renunciation of instinctual gratifications, compliance and a sacrifice of one's individuality in return for the sometimes dubious benefits of civilisation. This partly parallels familiar later educational theorisation on the narrower concept of the hidden curriculum (e.g., Giroux & Penna, 1983), as well as resonating with many of the drivers of contemporary alternative education. Freud noted neurosis, anxiety, depression and suicide as among the costs of instinctual renunciation when it was overly severe. Civilisation, for Freud, thus, rested on a significant degree of unhealthy repression and alienation. A reformed, analytically informed education must, he argued, take individual differences into account and "has to find its way between the Scylla of non-interference and the Charybdis of frustration. Unless this problem is entirely insoluble, an optimum must be discovered which will enable education to achieve the most and damage the least" (Freud, 1933/1964, p. 149). In the face of this thorny problem, Freud mostly eschewed aligning psychoanalysis with particular educational regimes.

Taking up the notion of alienation, Lacan emphasised the origins of the ego in the illusions or fantasies of the mirror stage with the emergence of desire being directed towards the lack or insufficiency felt as an aspect of our alienated selves. Here, the other becomes the fantasised object that offers completeness. Lacan describes the mirror stage as "the original adventure through which man, for the first time, has the experience of seeing himself, of reflecting on himself and conceiving of himself as other than he is—an essential dimension of the human, which entirely structures his fantasy life" (Lacan, 2006, p. 79). This suggestion shows us in what way the term "fantasy" as theorized in Lacanian psychoanalysis may implicate the study of education. If the human subject is formed as a fantasy and if this formation is a model for his other fantasies, then educators—from parents to teachers—find themselves in a "world" full of fantasies. This world includes the fantasies of selves (of students, parents, teachers and others); the fantasies about the roles that these

individuals are expected to play in a social environment; the fantasies about future, which we may call wishes or desires; and the fantasies of educational institutions, which may overlap or conflict with the individual's own fantasies.

End Word

Having begun here with Freud's idea that phantasies originated through frustration of unconscious wishes, of which they may be a partial expression, we have traced key vicissitudes of the concept and its educational relevance through the works of somewhat divergent psychoanalytic schools. While challenging to everyday orthodoxies and offering no easy solutions, this complex of ideas opens up new possibilities for conceptualising praxis within educational settings as we have highlighted.

Psychoanalysis posits a more or less alienated and decentred self, enmeshed within an alienating and repressive social order. Privileging of the external and neglect of subjectivity—typical of traditional formal education—exacerbates the damage. Yet neglect of the external, of the reality of objects, of aggression and so on, psychoanalysis would suggest simply risks damage of another sort. In negotiating this tightrope the would-be teacher needs binocular vision, with an eye on their own and their students' subjectivity and another on shared objective realities. Self-knowledge is a vital part of this, as are mental qualities such as receptivity—or what John Keats in 1817 termed "negative capability…that is when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason"— (Forman, 1931, pp. 69–72) and the capacity to phantasise (or dream) her/his student as a means of creating and sustaining potentialities. From the perspective of Winnicott, such attitudes typify play and transitional space, phenomena crucial for the teacher as well as students, in a similar way to Lacan's *sujet supposé savoir* offering a possibility of liberation from the tyranny of having to know.

While psychoanalytic *after-education* along traditional lines within the clinic at best offers succour to a few, more ambitious analytically informed psycho-social educational alternatives can potentially go further in addressing the structural problems. Freud himself voiced this in the *New Introductory Lectures*, arguing that the potential contribution of psychoanalysis to education is "perhaps the most important of all the activities of analysis" (1933/1964, p. 146).

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