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Transferential Loss

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TRANSFERENTIAL LOSS: UNCONSCIOUS DYNAMICS OF LOVE, LEARNING, AND GRIEVING

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Abstract

In this essay, I work with transference as a relational dynamic from psychoanalysis, to analyze love and loss experienced through learning relationships. Transference is the unconscious transfer of emotions from past relationships to present experiences. I explore transference in learning by disclosing my case study of dyadic learning, guided by Indian scholarship about a guru-shishya/teacher-student relationship of hierarchical, processual learning. I discuss the significance of transference for analyzing emotions of this superior-subordinate learning dyad, through my experience of transferential loss. I conceptualize transferential loss as emotions that accompany the loss of a formal, unequal, time-bound teacher-student transference relationship. I analyze this loss by scrutinizing shifting authority dynamics that I encountered with a loved academic guide, or guru. Through surfacing changes in transference and the pain of losing the teacher-student learning, this essay challenges neoliberal approaches to higher education which valorize instrumental and disembodied goals. Transferential loss connects Indian psychoanalysis about dyads and transference to management learning scholarship, including the importance of the unequal guru-shishya conceptualization for critical management education. This essay contributes to psychoanalysis in management scholarship, develops the concept of transference for learning contexts, and offers a case analysis to the management literature on grief, love, and academic self-disclosures.

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I walk with the new cup of tea,

Back to my work space and think of you again,

With fondness,

And I'm swept suddenly into tears.

It hits me this way at times – unexpectedly, with painful intensity,

In that way of grief -

The waves of grief.

You're still here. I can call you, email you. I sometimes see you.

And, you're gone.

Our marked time of a learning relationship has passed.

I grieve.

No longer am I the shishya, the student,

Of the guru-shishya – the teacher-pupil relationship.

I am unsettled in this space.

I miss my teacher.

And I often reflect about what this all means.

For learning relationships. For love of learning.

For holding onto learning,

For higher education spaces where this love,

This importance of learning, for me seems ever-diminishing.

Grasping, searching,

For love and learning,

And through this searching - grieving.

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Learning is a process. To learn, one needs to open up to newness and challenge previous

assumptions (a process discussed by some as unlearning, e.g. Rushmer & Davies, 2004).

Facing the prospects of not knowing is a vulnerable experience (e.g. French, 1997), and an

unequal relationship to a teacher is important during these challenging uncertainties. Thus,

learning is a *relational* process, shaped by anxieties and emotions, including love. However,

emotions in learning relationships are ignored by neoliberal logics which intrude upon higher

education environments. These logics elevate individualism and a customer satisfaction

focus on evaluations, avoiding the vulnerability and dependency which are integral to

learning.

To interrogate the consequences of neoliberal logics for learning, I turn to

psychoanalysis, and the Indian guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship with unequal

dynamics. Guided by these theoretical frameworks, I offer my own personal account of

transferential loss, to probe the importance of vulnerability and relationality in learning. I

emphasize the importance of love and loss to impart the dangers of neoliberal logics, which

damage the cultivation of relationships at the heart of learning.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS ESSAY

I opened this essay for the *Academy of Management Learning & Education* with my poem, to

share my grief upon the formal ending of my learning in relation to my teacher, within the

UK Higher Education landscape. Poetry about a learning relationship, disclosure of pain – I

include these forms of expression here, to write in challenge of neoliberalized packaging of

management education in marketized, instrumental terms. Neoliberal ideology has been

wielding detrimental, wide-ranging effects on collective concerns and wellbeing (Harvey,

2005).

I therefore develop this essay, first with a section discussing the problems of

neoliberal encroachment upon learning, to set the political scene for my autobiographical

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analysis. Following this first section about neoliberal threats to learning, I proceed to

management research about the significance of emotions and relationships in learning, with a

focus on psychoanalysis. A psychoanalytic framework provides depth for analyzing love and

loss within the learning relationship, with the concept of *transference* (Gabriel, 1999), which

is defined in this way:

> Transference is a process where a person's emotions and expectations from a past relation(s)
> are unconsciously transferred to another in the present. Another way to think about
> transference is projecting our emotions, like fear and love experienced in childhood, to an
> important authority figure[1].

This relational dynamic of transference is critical for working through fears and

anxieties integral to learning. Guided by Freudian psychoanalysis and Indian scholarship, I

work with transference to conceptualize *transferential loss*:

> Transferential loss refers to *emotional experiences*, such as periods of anxiety and sadness,
> that *accompany the loss* of a formal, unequal, time-bound teacher-student *transference
> relationship*.

Following the section on emotions and relationships in learning, I then proceed with

discussion of the guru-shishya (teacher-learner) dyad and Indian psychoanalysis, with

contributions to critical management education and psychoanalysis debates. Next, I disclose

my emotions of struggle and vulnerability through my autobiographical case study of

transferential loss. After my case study analysis, I provide a summary of the essay's

contributions. I conclude with reflections on why I undertook this project, and I discuss the

implications of neoliberalized education for love and learning.

NEOLIBERAL, CONSUMER APPROACHES TO HIGHER EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Neoliberalism, as an approach to organizing society, involves a lionization of

individuality and the idea of "choice" (Fotaki, 2006; Gabriel, 2015). In this approach,

markets are viewed as rational, with dismissal of the need for collectivity and structures to

address social welfare (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015). Fotaki and Prasad (2015) analyze neoliberal

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capitalism as legitimizing and intensifying social inequalities, facilitated by business and

management school training priorities. The authors recommend relationality as one of the

ways to counter this ideology's damaging consequences (2015).

Vince (2011: 344) makes note of the "institutional forces at work in Business and

Management Schools to discourage approaches to learning that might undermine provider

and/or customer expectations and happiness (Herbert and Stenfors, 2007)", and he depicts

learning as marked by anxieties and defenses within emotional and political contexts.

Implications of this work are that meaningful learning is not enclosed within readily

measurable outcomes, favored by marketized, customer satisfaction-oriented university

settings. Instead, learning is messy, social, and at times unconscious, a crucial point for

psychoanalytic contributions to experiencing transformative learning (Vince, 2011).

Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001) portray the significance of relationality for

learning in a consumer context (2001: 447):

> In a culture where relations among producers and consumers replace other forms of human
> relations, the delicate and fragile relationship between teacher and learner threatens to be
> overwhelmed by the merchandising of alluring educational 'packages', suitable for self-
> promotion and marketing but offering few changes of genuine originality and learning
> (Sturdy and Gabriel, 2000).

This threat to teacher-learner relations figures powerfully in contemporary

neoliberalizing educational contexts, particularly UK Higher Education. Examples include

the 2012 tripling of tuition fees in England and attendant valorization of customer discourses;

ever-expanding metrics of UK academic staff's research and teaching; advice to "sell" one's

self in academic interviews; and the push to entrepreneurial academic promotion criteria.

French's astute analysis about the consequences of the "ideology of the market" (1997: 487)

upon learning has striking resonance for these current dynamics:

> The dominant views today emphasize a linear conceptualization of learning, defining
> it as the mastery of predefined competencies or skills. This view is expressed in the
> omnipotent phrase, 'by the end of this module, you will be able to…', indicating that the
> envisaged learning is predetermined, restricted, and, above all, quantifiable…
> It is a *competence* view of learning that mirrors very closely the contemporary culture

of *performativity* (French, 1997: 487, Original emphasis).

The intensification of these ideological approaches in the UK context, in moments such as 2012, works against providing healthy space for teacher-student emotional relationships. Without these meaningful relationships, support is dissolved for the unpredictable, anxiety-provoking dynamics of long-term learning. Neoliberalized education promotes instrumental transactions; *relationships* nurture learning.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMOTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN LEARNING

In this section, I will first highlight studies in management and organizational behavior literature which have focused on the significance of emotions and relationships in processes of learning. This section continues with a psychoanalytic perspective on emotions and relationality of learning, with an emphasis on transference, leading into my discussion of transferential loss.

Themes of *care* and *criticality* emerge in analyses of relational learning processes. Corner and Pio (2017) studied postgraduate international students' research supervision in New Zealand. The authors discussed the significance of supervisors' pastoral care for students, and the centrality of critical reflexivity to address tensions in supervisor-student relations (2017). The importance of a guru was revealed, as "students saw a supervisor as a 'guru' or revered teacher and themselves as disciples meant to faithfully implement the guru's instructions. This guru–disciple relationship is part of India's culture and is how knowledge has been traditionally transmitted (Pio, 2007)" (Corner & Pio, 2017: 28).

Gabriel (2009) elucidates that "at the heart of the teacher–student relation" (2009: 384) is the intertwining of an ethic of care with an ethic of criticism. This dynamic means that the cultivation of critical thinking will ultimately fail without care for the learner, and care without any thoughtfully-considered critical feedback also impoverishes the process of

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learning. Criticism may initially be uncomfortable, challenging one's narcissism and

stimulating defenses against the anxieties of not knowing (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001),

but criticism is crucial for developmental learning and effective when delivered with care.

Focusing on the '*developmental process of the business student'* (Hanson, Moore,

Bachleda, Canterbury, Franco, Marion, & Schreiber, 2017: 397, Original emphasis),

researchers studied the experiences of Brazilian, Moroccan, and North American

undergraduate students with regard to ethical development and relationships at University.

Students' interview responses revealed the significance of teacher-student relationality for

their felt support and moral development. This study illuminates the centrality of processual

aspects of relationships that are valued by students for their learning.

Literature on emotions and relationships indicates that learning requires facing

uncertainty, difference, and vulnerability. Exploring group learning dynamics of

postgraduate international students, Gabriel and Griffiths (2008) explained that management

of anxieties was crucial for learning groups, comprised of individuals interacting across

cultural differences. Tomkins and Ulus (2016) demonstrate in an undergraduate setting the

importance of emotions in learning, including vulnerable emotions of the teacher, emotions

of student resistance, and happiness of learning created through teacher-student interactions.

Learning is therefore difficult, emotionally-charged, shaped by social and political

contexts, interconnected with other learners, and supported by a teacher's care intertwined

with criticality. The ethic of care is communicated through relationality and emotions, by the

process of the developing teacher-student learning dyad. Psychoanalysis provides potent

concepts to explore *unconscious processes* of this learning.

A Psychoanalytic Approach to Emotions and Relationships in Learning

A psychoanalytic perspective has at its core the importance of the unconscious (Gabriel, 1999). From its Freudian beginnings, psychoanalysis has explicitly acknowledged organizational and social dynamics and their effects on individuals (e.g. Freud, 1955). This framework provides critical possibilities for interrogating layers of meanings about self-other relationships in the context of wider dynamics (Gabriel, 1999; Kakar, 1995; Stein, 2007).

Psychoanalytic resources to analyze relationships include defenses, also called defense mechanisms, which work in response to anxiety-provoking experiences. Defenses differ in when they arise developmentally, and they may help to address discomfort in the short-term. However, overuse of defense(s) may intensify rather than alleviate distress (Cramer, 2000). A helpful exploration of defense mechanisms is found in resources such as: Anna Freud's work, based on extensive analytic and research experience (Freud, 1966); a foundational study of social defenses (Menzies, 1960); and research analyzing defenses in varied organizational contexts (e.g. Fotaki & Hyde, 2015; Vince, 2006). Specific defenses will be analyzed below within the context of the case study.

Psychoanalysis has contributed to analyses of higher education and learning, by illuminating *unconscious* relational dynamics like defenses that can facilitate or undermine learning. Vince (1998) demonstrates that a widely-used model of learning, Kolb's learning cycle, has assumptions which do not consider unconscious processes of fantasies, anxieties, and defenses. An experience of learning involves being confronted with something new. Far from generating an open and rational response from a learner, this encounter with newness may elicit anxiety and accompanying defenses (Vince, 1998). Therefore, it is violent when depersonalized rationality assumptions underpinning neoliberal capitalism are pushed into university environments (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015). These conditions damage critical prospects for confronting emotional dynamics such as anxieties, which are at the heart of learning, depicted vividly by Vince (e.g. 1998; 2011).

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Vince (2011) theorized the innovative concept of spatial psychodynamics, to illuminate how different spatial arrangements generate political dynamics like gendered power relations, with accompanying fantasies and anxieties. Vince (2011) outlines how the unconscious expands our understanding of the concept of learning, such as learning as a dynamic, relational process. During this process, our emotions shape the interpretations that we make about ourselves and others.

Petriglieri, Wood, and Petriglieri (2011) worked with resources from psychoanalysis, such as a holding environment from psychoanalyst Winnicott, to analyze the benefits of personalized learning. Their context was a personal development elective in an international MBA program. Relational learning with peers, therapists, and coaches, as well as institutional holding dynamics such as space for self-reflection, helped students to work through the emotional difficulties of learning.

Vince and Gabriel (2011) highlight the importance of emotional experiences from one's developmental past. This past is a key source of unconscious patterns that may persist into adulthood, shaping how individuals respond to anxieties evoked by uncertainties of learning. Past experiences that may affect learning include painful emotions that accompanied learning failures and disappointments. A teacher, a facilitator of learning, becomes a vital presence for whether and in what directions the dynamics of learning occur (2011). In the context of a learner's personal history with unconscious dynamics, the teacher becomes a critical presence for the experience of *transference*.

Transference – A Core Relational Dynamic from Psychoanalysis

In psychoanalysis, *transference* provides an explanatory framework for past relational experiences shaping current learning encounters. Transferred past relations may include emotional patterns of interactions in childhood, as well as prior adulthood relationships

(Fotaki, 2006). An example of transference is unconsciously expecting harshness, or indulgent care, depending on one's previous relational patterns.

Transference may also manifest through seeking in another person an experience which reinforces, or counters, what one has encountered emotionally in the past. For instance, an unconscious motivation for seeking a specific relationship could be an effort through transference to heal from previous relational wounds (Frosh, Phoenix, & Pattman, 2003; Kakar, 1991). To elaborate, an individual who has experienced relational disappointment or trauma in a previous adult and/or parent-child relationship, may unconsciously seek corrective healing experiences through subsequent dyadic encounters. The guru fantasy as analyzed by Kakar (1991) exemplifies transference, as this fantasy is an unconscious search for a guru, or guide, one "who will heal the wounds suffered in the original parent-child relationship" (50). A relationship to an authority figure provides fertile ground for these transferred emotional yearnings (Freud, 1911-1913).

Countertransference refers to the emotional responses that an individual experiences, in response to another person's transference (Gabriel, 1999; Theodosius, 2006). It is important to address countertransference briefly, to reinforce that transference is a relational process unfolding over time, in connection with another person's countertransference. The countertransference responses from a teacher to a student's transferences, such as empathic concern in response to transferred expectations of rejection, will shape the ongoing interactions of the dyad and learning opportunities that may arise. Transference and countertransference are thus interwoven together in delicate, mutually affecting, and crucially *unconscious* ways.

Transference has been applied as an analytical tool in management and organizational literature. Reflections on transference and countertransference provide pathways into making sense of organizational encounters embedded in political contexts (Stein, 2004). An area of

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emphasis has been the roles of consultants and organizational researchers visiting

organizations, focusing on countertransference that outsiders experience in relation to

workers (Baum, 1994; Czander & Eisold, 2003; Diamond & Allcorn, 2003; Arnaud, 2012).

Fotaki (2006) illuminates the importance of transference for the patient-doctor

relationship, which can be affected by the introduction of patient choice agendas. This choice

agenda figures prominently in the neoliberal approach to organizing as discussed above. In a

higher education context, the valorization of "choice" attempts to equate students with

customers and education with an instrumental product. These impositions interfere with

important transference processes in higher education and thus disrupt potential for learning.

French (1997) conveys the management of transference as crucial for supporting

learning. Specifically, the teacher's containment of anxieties is an important process in

connection with students' transference of emotions. Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001)

draw upon transference to discuss the unconscious, emotional dynamics "which bind together

student and teacher, practitioner and consultant, patient and analyst (Freud, 1912, 1986).

Through transference, early feelings and images are re-directed to new figures of authority"

(2001: 440). They illuminate the centrality of anxiety for learning, as well as the significance

of *love*, particularly in the "Love for one's teacher…[as] a major stimulant for an individual's

learning process" (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001: 440). I explore love and grief in this

vital transference relationship, conceptualized as transferential loss.

Transferential Loss

My focus with transferential loss is explicitly upon the *processual* experiences of *love* and

loss within an *unequal learning dyad*. By transferential loss, I do not mean that a loss of

transference altogether occurs. From a psychoanalytic perspective, experiences of

transference continue as long as individuals continue to meet. The loss is a *process* of

mourning, which occurs when a period of formal learning in relation to a teacher reaches an

inevitable end. In my case analysis, this loss is accompanied by a range of emotions over a

period of time. These emotions include deep sadness, along with the emergence of hope in

more advanced stages of mourning. The emotions of grief throughout this process have been

stitched to love.

I theorize transferential loss drawing upon Indian literature about psychoanalysis and

the *guru-shishya* (or guru-chela) relationship (Neki, 1973). The *guru* refers to a teacher

occupying a specific role, elaborated below, and the *shishya* refers to the student learning

from this guru, in an explicitly unequal dyad (Kakar, 1995). The guru-shishya illuminates

crucial dynamics of the teacher-learning dyad for learning, including: an explicit emphasis on

love; the significance of an *unequal* learning dyad for *transformation*; and an *unconditional*

holding of space for the student to *fail as part of the learning process* (Neki, 1973). Indian

psychoanalysis illuminates the significance of this guru-shishya relationship, through an

emphasis upon *unconscious dynamics* in authority and learning, as probed further below.

THE GURU-SHISHYA LEARNING DYAD: AN INDIAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE EMOTIONS OF LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS

> *At the heart of any learning process*, be it academic excellence, spiritual attainment, or development of the inherent potentialities, *it is the relationship that exists between the guru and the shishya that matters.* It involves the dynamic interplay of personalities, the central one being that of the teacher and the taught (Raina, 2002: 191, Author emphasis).

I begin with this excerpt from Indian scholarship, to underscore the guru-shishya

emphasis upon an *unequal learning dyad*. This approach has been illuminating to make

sense of my own dyadic experience, growth, and grief upon the formal end of the learning

experience. I proceed with an overview of Indian psychoanalysis, which provides depth

about the guru-shishya dynamic. I continue with the importance of the guru-shishya

conceptualization for critical management education, and for psychoanalysis debates.

Indian Psychoanalysis

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The application of psychoanalysis in India was initiated by Girindrasekhar Bose

(Nandy, 1995), who in pre-Partition India established in 1921 the Indian Psychoanalytic

Society, and Bose was in correspondence with Freud about psychoanalytic theorizing. Nandy

(1995) analyzed the colonial tensions of psychoanalysis in Bengal, a historically significant

region of the British Empire's presence in the Subcontinent. Hartnack (2001) discussed how

a psychoanalytic framework has been used by Indian scholars to interrogate political

complexities of colonial encounters.

Indian psychoanalysis has unearthed universalist assumptions in psychoanalytic

scholarship as conceived and practiced in Western contexts. Examples include: culturally-

diverse manifestations of castration anxiety (Sinha, 1966; Kakar, 2008) and the Oedipal

complex (Sripada, 2005; Tang & Smith, 1996); childhood fantasies connected to country-

specific patriarchal dynamics (Nagpal, 2000); and family honor as a source of resistance to

anxiety-provoking experiences (Roland, 1991), bringing attention to how unconscious

processes are shaped by familial-cultural conditioning. Defenses may occur in response to

cultural prohibitions, such as restrictions against challenging superiors (Roland, 1982).

Nandy (1982) demonstrates that Western psychoanalysis can learn from Indian

psychoanalysis about the centrality of traumatic colonial history for understanding

contemporary unconscious processes. Thus, Indian scholarship broadens the application of

psychoanalysis, helping to globalize knowledge beyond Western and white discourses.

Cultural shaping of unconscious dynamics does not negate possible shared

unconscious processes across borders, as indicated by psychoanalyst Sudhir Kakar's analysis

of a *guru fantasy*. This fantasy of being cared for by a guru, a guide or teacher, is not an

unconscious desire limited to the borders of India. American and European individuals

seeking counsel have demonstrated this guru desire (Kakar, 1995). This primarily

unconscious fantasy involves yearning for a guru to heal and strengthen the self (Kakar, 1991). A guru fantasy may shape the interactions in a guru-shishya learning dyad.

The precise roles and meanings of the guru and the shishya have varied across time periods in the Indian Subcontinent (Kakar, 1991). A common theme across these periods is learning from the guru through an intense *relationship* and experience of *transformation*, which is interwoven in this essay's case study. The emphasis is on the guru as "still recognizably human… demanding from the disciple the exercise of his [sic] reason rather than exercises in submission and blind obedience" (Kakar, 1991: 42). This guru makes transformation possible through nurturant criticism, which supports positive transference, leading to enriching learning experiences.

Ramaswami and Dreher (2010) discuss the historical significance of the guru-shishya relationship in an interview study of Indian MBA students in the US, asking their views about mentoring in India. Responses included the importance of protection, "Shielding the protégé from untimely or potentially damaging contact with other senior officials" (2010: 512), and "Psychosocial Functions" like role-modeling (2010: 512). Yet, explicit mention of a guru did not arise in their study, and the authors question if mentors are distinguished from gurus – whether "that term is reserved for more special, intense, and longer-term mentoring relationships" (2010: 523). Their observation about the long-term is significant for the political scene of my case study. Neoliberalized education with heightened short-termism and precarity is violent to the nurturing of longer, deep relationships foundational to learning. Transformational learning from a long-term relationship with the guru has significance for critical management education, and for the application of transference from psychoanalysis to management learning contexts.

The Significance of the Guru-Shishya Dyad for Critical Management Education, and for Psychoanalysis Debates

The guru-shishya conceptualization provides an important contribution to literature on authority relations and management learning. For instance, in critical management education[2], there are arguments about the problems of power and hierarchical relations (Reynolds, 1999). Yet, with my case study, I contend that hierarchy, and critical transformations through learning, are not incompatible. The relationship with my guru was an unequal one, because of this person's senior organizational status and decades of scholarly expertise, and my status as a student facing newness in subjects and seeking to learn. *Transference* is central to this unequal relationship, as authority triggered unconscious relational dynamics, such as hope to be taught and cared for unconditionally by the one with greater hierarchical status. The guru-shishya model helped profoundly to make sense of my learning, because this unequal status did not inhibit learning, but rather enabled it to flourish.

Kakar discusses this learning dyad as "one of perfect equality in self-realization, with radical insight as its goal. The relationship between the guru and disciple was of intimacy, not of merger. Both the guru and disciple were separate individuals, and potential equals, though striving for ever-greater closeness" (Kakar, 1991 : 42-43). There is deference to the guru, but the student "does not surrender his [sic] questioning spirit" (Neki, 1973: 758). The guru offers a dyadic space of healthy boundaries and *care*, to contend with anxieties of learning in the life path on which the student travels.

The guru therefore nurtures the conditions for learning, rather than imposing ideas and dictating ways of being. The unequal dyad is still important, as the guru's own expertise can provide safe, powerful conditions for self-directed learning. This guru-shishya long-term process may offer learning for social consciousness and change in ways that harmonize with critical management education aims (e.g. Perriton, 2014; Śliwa, Sørensen, & Cairns, 2015). Indeed, Neki (1973) depicts this dyadic relationship as providing:

> encounters for *transformation*…for the release of the individual from certain forms of conditioning that have been imposed upon him [sic] by *social institutions*. If social

> institutions may be considered as a form of communication – with as much validity as, say, the rules of grammar – we may say that… [guru-shishya] relationships tend to correct the idiom of this communication (1973: 759, Author emphasis).

This focus resonates with core aspects of critical management education, such as questioning and reflective processes (Reynolds & Vince, 2004; Vince, 2010).

The guru-shishya dynamic also offers perspectives for debates about transference outside of the clinical context (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Frosh, 2010). Neki (1973) bridges the guru-shishya relationship and the therapist-patient relationship, by indicating differences as well as core similarities, such as a "desire for change, and a desire to bring about change…a strongly affective relationship is the basis of all psychotherapy – and this is what the therapist calls 'transference'. The guru has an avowed 'enduring *love*' for the disciple [shishya, student]. It is one kind of deep relationship that binds them" (Neki, 1973: 759-760, Author emphasis).

This importance of the guru's "loving care" (Neki, 1973: 760) resonates with Antonacopoulou and Gabriel (2001), who indicate a parallel between the love for an analyst and the love for a teacher; a love of truth underpins both relationships. French (1997) depicts differences between teaching and psychoanalysis, as well as similarities, including the need for boundaries, the importance of recognizing transference, and the need for supportive learning space, with reference to psychoanalyst Winnicott.

In Freud's writings, transference is a relational phenomenon, shaped by early childhood influences. One's unfulfilled "need for love" could shape "approach[ing] every new person whom he [sic] meets" (Freud, 1911-1913: 100) with this emotional pattern, implying that the transference of unconscious emotional needs is not limited to clinical practice. As noted by French (1997: 490), Freud also made direct reference to transference in an education context, analyzing transference to schoolmasters. Acknowledging that care must be exercised in how transference is applied in different contexts, my position is to

emphasize the core emotional meanings of transference – the unconscious, emotionally-marked processes experienced in a dyad with authority dynamics.

TRANSFERENTIAL LOSS: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CASE STUDY

To embark upon my own personal account, in this section I first highlight key studies on grief, loss, love, and academic disclosures. I then disclose my own painful, immeasurably valuable long-term dyadic learning experience, drawing upon transference and the guru-shishya to make sense of my loss.

Contributing to Management Research about Loss and Love

In research about work and management, there has been crucial attention to the significance of grief and loss (Bell & Taylor, 2016; Fineman, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1988; Kanji & Cahusac, 2015), and to unacknowledged loss and trauma (Gabriel, 2012). Research about grief has not delved frequently into management academics' own experiences. As noted by Whiteman (2010: 331), "grief or heartbreak is rarely captured within our management texts. Emotions in organizations are clearly legitimate topics of study (Fineman, 1993; Hochschild, 1983), but our own aches in the face of our research tend not to be." In this essay I disclose my heartache with a specific learning experience, similar in approach to Prasad's (2014) analysis of his emotionally charged field work.

The grief explored here is not a result of organizational loss, such as restructuring and redundancies, which can be experienced in profoundly unsettling ways (Stein, 1997; Gabriel, 2012; Fraher & Gabriel, 2014). Nor is the experience loss from a superior's physical death, which can trigger grief and adjustment struggles (Hyde & Thomas, 2003). This case study explores love and loss of a learning relationship.

Advocating for scholarship about love in learning connects to Bell and Sinclair's work (2014: 273) "as a 'methodology of the heart' (Pelias 2004; Sparkes, 2007) located in the

researcher's body", and to an analysis advocating for negative capability, with multiple

powerful references to the heart (Saggurthi & Thakur, 2016). There have been striking

analyses of love, such as its potential for political transformation of organizations (Vachhani,

2015), and the importance of eros, of love, in work as academics (Bell & Sinclair, 2014). My

case study is research *about* love, and *from* the heart, a tribute of love for a teacher.

By sharing an autobiographical analysis of transferential loss, I am offering a

psychoanalytic contribution to researcher embodiment and reflexivity. The importance of an

academic's disclosure for our knowledge has been illuminated by scholars including Brewis

(e.g. 2005) and Baines (2010). Researcher disclosures in management scholarship have not

often incorporated psychoanalysis for making sense of academic experiences, notable

exceptions including Kenny (2012) and Prasad (2014) about their fieldwork experiences.

Drawing upon these and other reflexive self-disclosures in management literature (e.g.

Cunliffe, 2018; Gilmore & Kenny, 2015; Girei, 2017; McDonald, 2016; Prasad, 2013), I

advocate for working with psychoanalysis for self-disclosure, drawing out contributions to

the emotions, relationships, and politics of learning.

Through reflecting on my grieving process with transferential loss, aided by the

Editor's and Reviewers' comments for improving this essay, I have grown in confidence to

take the risks of academic disclosure. As Bell and Sinclair (2014) and Prasad (2014) note,

there are indeed risks in this kind of writing. Reflecting on love and the pain of grief is a risk

worth taking, to probe micro processes in learning contexts, as a pathway to challenging

neoliberal discourses that attempt to silence love and learning.

Case Study Context and Autobiographical Analysis of Transferential Loss

This case study is a reflection upon transference to an academic guide, a guru, whose

presence enabled me to reach this place of writing for academic outlets and developing as a

scholar. I experienced changes in this relationship which needed time for me to make sense

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of consciously. This unequal dyadic experience had slipped away, by necessity through the end of the formal learning. The sadness and hurt that struck me led to interest in theorizing transferential loss.

It is important to note, prompted by reviewer feedback, that transferential loss could be experienced during an ongoing specific superior-subordinate relationship, as when one anticipates the loss of the relationship. For the purpose of my case study, I will specify transferential loss as occurring when the teacher-student transference relationship formally ends, and there is an abrupt change in authority dynamics. This change occurs without a recognized space for mourning, triggering an intense range of *ambivalent* emotions and defenses. Ambivalence means the co-occurrence of positive and negative transferences (Freud, 1911-1913).

I will refer to the person who was my learning guide in a generalized way to protect confidentiality. It is crucial however to provide a few biographical and contextual details, to acknowledge the connection of superior-subordinate relationships with cultural and political dynamics. My context for application of the guru-shishya dyad is higher education in the UK. At a stage in my educational training, I needed to complete a piece of work that required appointment of an academic supervisor. I have been very lucky to have several supportive teachers, starting from a grade school teacher who challenged us as children with language learning, pushing the boundaries of what we thought we could achieve at that level.

The individual about whom I now write was (is) special in this line of teachers. I realized that this process of supervised learning was marked by a treasured transferential relationship, one which can be conceptualized as actualizing, in fact exceeding, the gifts of a guru-shishya relationship (Kakar, 1995). The pain of the learning process that I experienced, alongside the treasure of comfort in the guru's care, had potent implications for this supervised relationship coming to an end.

The realization of this ending generated grief, an embodied sense of being unsettled, stuck, grasping with anguish for a time irretrievably gone. Coming to an understanding that I was grieving did not occur immediately. I underwent a period of sustained self-questioning of my pain and confusion. I reached an awakening from changes in the transference with the beloved authority figure. This loss was the end of the teacher-student dyad and its associated transferences during structured learning. I was (am) experiencing a period of what I have come to understand as transferential loss.

It is important to reflect on what I may have transferred unconsciously during this dyadic period of supervised learning[3]. Through ongoing sustained reflections and the writing of this essay, I realized that I transferred hopes to the guru for being loved unconditionally. I transferred desires for the guru to help me improve myself, and for me to remain worthy of care even if I failed. My transferences also included fears, of being abandoned, of being rejected. These transferred fears eased over time, in contact with verbal and implicit expressions of care from the guru. I thus had ambivalent transferences – both positive transferences such as hopes, together with negative ones, such as fears and unconscious bracing for indifference or rejection.

It is difficult to express in words how much I was challenged by this guide with a gentle strength. At times, just the inspiring academic presence, with no words needed, was a relational push charged enough to question myself and recognize my strengths. The guru gifted a critical space for me to confront weaknesses academically and relationally, and evolve as a student and writer. I experienced the sense that I mattered, not only as a student, but also as a human being, an experience that actualized my transferred hopes.

My previous teacher training, in a non-UK context, was strict about the significance of teacher-student boundaries, shaping my transferred expectations about boundaries in this educational dyad. I was grateful for the teacher-student boundaries established and

maintained throughout by the guru, as these boundaries provided feelings of safety. The appropriate guru and shishya roles were clear, nurturing my intrapsychic spaces to develop and work with ideas, and to have the strength to fail, fall down, and pick myself up again.

When I completed this piece of work, the formal teacher-student relationship ended. After this point, I continued to address the teacher with formal address, something that was an expectation of my upbringing and school teachings on respect to authority. Yet it was more than cultural conditioning. I realized that I had developed a pattern of relating that provided intrapsychic benefits. I transferred my hopes to the guru guide, and I settled into this transference which provided a sense of familiarity, cherished learning moments, and growth.

The emotions that I transferred during this learning period did not involve transferred expectations of only easy protection and positive relating, for I learned that learning required struggle. I encountered direct criticism and sharp, difficult challenges from the guru to improve in my work. I came to understand, through the responses to my transferred emotions, that I would be accepted even when faltering and failing. I learned that these criticisms were with, and not contrary to, care. This aspect of the transference connects to the management learning literature on the importance of criticism with care (e.g. Vince & Gabriel, 2011). I was a fortunate student to experience a learning relationship in which both criticism and care were transmitted in balance so beautifully.

Embodied moments during my learning struggles in this relationship varied, from fear on whether I could manage the work, to laughter on being asked to re-read a particularly badly constructed sentence. Tears of disappointment were shed about feedback on my work, along with tears of joy when exceeding expectations. These sensations occurred privately, but their source was relational. Throughout, this relational process was underpinned by a

growing love for a bearer of learning who cared for me as a learner and human being, unconditionally pushing me to exceed myself, evoking my childhood teacher.

I share my learning experience with transferential loss to demonstrate in a dyadic, embodied way the critical insights from research in this essay about emotions, relationships, and learning (e.g. French, 1997; Vince, 1998).

Learning is painful.

Learning is messy.

Learning involves unconscious processes.

Learning requires confronting anxieties.

Learning is relational.

Learning needs love.

Learning phases end – do we talk about what happens emotionally when they do?

After the close of this formal learning period, I persisted in using formal address, and the teacher started gently to request addressing her/him by first name, as the student goals were achieved, and we were now colleagues. This individual offered less hierarchical relating, and even the possibility of becoming friends in the future, something one would expect to generate joy. Instead, I felt wounded in response to these generous gestures. I was (am) mourning, for the end of the student status in relation to the teacher, for the end of the unconditional emotional space of the teacher-student transferential relationship. This offer of informality was a reminder that my teacher was no longer my formal instructor, stimulating waves of pain in my grief.

This encouragement to relate on colleague terms was experienced as acute loss. What exactly was lost? Reflecting upon this question, I have considered a range of experiences in the teacher-student transference which ceased and triggered grief of transferential loss:

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How could I contend with the disappearance of the safe guru space, by one who I appreciated as being in a higher hierarchical position? How do I accept the slipping away of the guru who watched over while providing ongoing developmental criticism?

How was my learning and growth to continue? This experience was irreplaceable – I still had (have) so much to learn, specific to this dyad.

To whom would I now transfer my hopes and emotional expectations and not be shamed, or ignored?

Who would hold my transferences with healthy boundaries of learning and provide critical care, to improve my potential contributions to socially just endeavors?

My loss prompts me to question the intrapsychic consequences of this loss, when a formal relationship to another in authority has suddenly ceased and transformed into a different dynamic of relating. What happens emotionally in transition?

The offer of being worthy enough to have the status of friend should appear to generate happiness, and a developmentally more mature way of interacting. This gesture on the surface was a pleasant act, by the teacher whom I admired (and sometimes feared! – not because of any harsh nature, but due to fear of letting her/him down). Yet, psychoanalysis offers us interpretations for responses that seem bewildering upon first inspection. The prospect of this opportunity for less formal relating had a deeply unsettling, rather than uplifting, effect.

Upon these new exchanges with the guru with kind offers for less hierarchical exchanges, it was not contentment that was experienced but something else – some sense of being suspended, feeling sad, for the teacher-student transference could no longer continue. I could not consciously understand these emotions accompanying this loss, until a period of upheaval prompting self-questioning and extended reflection – a process ongoing with feedback provided for this essay.

I was (am) (still) grieving.

Raina (2002) notes that if the period of guru-shishya learning is progressing well, the imbalance in status and roles begins to disappear. The guru "helps the disciple to find himself [sic] and in the process, as Neki (1973) puts it, the 'unequals' end up as 'co-equals' " (2002: 182). I experienced this similar movement of role disappearance and changed relating.

With my experience, I offer a perspective on the shishya's progression in learning, and corresponding changing relation to the guru, emphasizing the *potential resistance* of the shishya/student to this move to equality. What happens when the student, the subordinate, *resists the movement away from the unequal dyad toward relating on more equal footing*? What are emotional and political meanings of *resisting closure* of this formal, hierarchical relationship, marked by transferences supporting learning?

This resistance may be experienced unconsciously, and manifest externally in perplexing ways, such as sadness in response to the teacher's generosity.

What is lost, and what does the loss trigger, when the guru who provides a safety net function (Raina, 2002), with critical feedback and care, disappears into a colleague or friend on same-status terms?

These questions raise the possibility that ostensibly positive developments, like successful completion of a piece of work, can overshadow losses when the guru is shed of formal teaching roles. We have rituals of graduation to mark successes. Do we need rituals of mourning on the losses, to give voice to what has been experienced with teacher expertise, as part of the fight back against neoliberal violence to education and critical learning?

During this time of transferential loss, I found myself reacting privately to my grief in some childish ways, which can be analyzed with the defense mechanism of *regression*. Regression (Freud, 1966; Midgley, 2013) is a defensive process of moving backward to

behavior in earlier developmental stages, to ease anxiety and seek comfort. For instance, at a large seminar, I met my former teacher and felt a qualitatively distinct shift in the transferential relationship. At a period of time after the seminar, I realized that I was no longer the student. I was just another colleague in the crowd! I felt childlike - where is my place now? How do I let the guru go? I spoke with the guru briefly after the seminar, and her/his response was collegial and informal, a movement forward to an ostensibly more mature encounter. Yet I was crestfallen, privately longing to continue developing myself in a structured period of critical care.

I have been lucky that this guru has continued to support and look out for me in my career development, ask after my health and other acts of care, but there was a deep, abrupt change in relating soon after the formal learning period ended. To share another incident, I saw the guru at an academic talk and addressed her/him by formal title. The response was raised eyebrows, a nonverbal reminder of previous emails that I must address her/him by first name, not by formal address. I responded to this nonverbal disapproval by saying that I couldn't help lapsing into defenses and use titles, as the talk was at the University at which she/he trained me. It became a humorous exchange on the surface, but this nonverbal response, reminding me that our unequal dyad was over, hurt.

I have continued to search unconsciously for this relationship that I lost. After a conference, I realized that something was missing following my presentation. When I was a student, the guru provided critical feedback on conference talks in a manner fitting the guru-shishya dynamic. Yet at this conference, the former guru was now listening and relating as an interested conference peer. From Indian psychoanalytic understanding (e.g. Neki, 1973), this peer relating is not the same as guidance within a superior/subordinate dyad, in which the guru serves a process of supervising, critically improving, and developing the learner.

At a time after the end of this guru-shishya formal learning period, I underwent an extended period of workplace trauma at a previous institution, and I could have reached out to the former guru in the spirit of friendship. However, I was longing to keep the student transferential experience, not ready to let go. Unconsciously I was clinging to the subordinate role rather than connecting on the status of friends, which for me was a weakened relation compared to the special student place. An alternative explanation, prompted by a reviewer's comments, is that my resistance to disclosing my trauma and suffering was deeply ambivalent. I longed to hold on to the guru-shishya transference, yet I also wished to demonstrate that I could take care of professional troubles on my own, without the authority figure of care. This contradictory emotional experience was largely unconscious. In Neki's depiction of the guru-shishya, the student discloses "inner struggles to the guru who, aware of the pitfalls, directs and enables the disciple to steer clear" (Neki, 1973: 758). Having found myself so enveloped in a trauma at a previous institution, not "steering clear" on this occasion, did I ultimately fail as a student in learning from the privileged guru-shishya experience of training and care?

Upon reflection, I surfaced emotional dynamics of this ambivalent period, wishing to reach out, but also worried that doing so would present myself as a disappointment to the guru. Perhaps my fears were expressing unconscious needs, for some form of unequal learning to endure, and for the unconditional receiver of my transferences to return. Alongside longing for the guru to be proud of my professional independence, I yearned for the trusted teacher to hold the pieces and help when shattering from trauma.

I have continued to experience intense emotions of sorrow in this transferential loss. Hope struggled to be felt among these emotions. When recognized, hope signified in this period of loss an important opportunity of growth and new ways of moving forward, by renegotiating relationships, which create *new transferential dynamics*.

After extended reflection I realized that one way in which I've contended with this loss and its emotions is *introjection* of the guru and the teacher-student transferential dynamics. Introjection, a defense mechanism elaborated upon by Anna Freud (Freud, 1966; Midgley, 2006) is applied here as internalizing the external experiences of the other in a dyad. Even when concrete experiences cease, the meanings of these relational patterns persist internally (Gabriel, 1999). As introjection is a defense, it is important to emphasize that it is mobilized in response to anxiety. For me, I felt the anxieties of loss and its range of meanings, including loss of the loved guru experience.

The guru, guide, and opener of so many experiences, became introjected, a part of self, guiding by taking on an intrapsychic life of its own. It may be that this introjection process begins *during* the guru-shishya transference of the formal dyadic learning period. In my conceptualization, this introjection takes on increasing importance *after* the end of the learning period, as a defense against the painful emotions of grief, by incorporating the lost experience of the guru – the lost object, in Freudian terms.

Yet, I realized that this introjection was not a full closing of my grief. The transferential longing for protection and learning from the guru is something that I continued to seek privately, and perhaps unconsciously part of me will endure in doing so. Interestingly, consciously I realized that there are limitations or emotional windfalls to holding on to a junior or subordinate status, as I was inclined to do following the end of this particular guru-shishya relationship. Unconsciously, however, psychoanalysis has a lot to say about the endurance of specific patterns of transference in unequal relations and how they shape our wishes and longings (Freud, 1911-1913).

The physical death of a superior in a hierarchical system is materially different from the loss of a specific relationship, but there are striking similarities to examine in my transferential loss case study. Hyde and Thomas (2003) analyze, in a health services context,

varied responses to a leader's death. They illustrate how death can surface powerful ambivalence about the lost leader, as well as the uniqueness of mourning responses which shed light on the relationship that has died[4]. Similarly, my loss triggered ambivalent emotions, such as moving feelings of love for realizing how much I have learned through the beauty of holding with caring criticism, together with anger and hurt for encouragement to move towards "equal" standing. My transferential loss was the loss of a relationship, a death, for it could not be retrieved, relived, or re-experienced in any other learning dyad or structured learning experience.

The leader's death (Hyde & Thomas, 2003) also triggered withdrawal patterns and defensive routines, analyzed by drawing upon Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia*. My persistence in addressing the guru formally may have constituted a defense of *denial*, a developmentally regressive defense (Freud, 1966), not wishing to acknowledge the death of this training period. Although I have now forced myself to address the guru in email by first name, it is still by putting the first name with … at the end. I indicated to the guru that I could not just address with one name as if she/he/they were any other colleague or acquaintance. The … held space for the formal titles I once included, symbolic of the disappeared relationship for which I still had longing.

This attention to physical death also prompted me to reflect on the centrality to classical Freudian thought of love and death drives – the duality of Eros and Thanatos[4]. In Fotaki's (2006) work about transference in a health context, Thanatos, the death drive, is depicted as an outward force that may be re-directed against the self in harmful ways. The guru-shishya transference, with healthy boundaries as I experienced, may also have the function of protecting the shishya from annihilating feelings of shame. A neoliberal invasion of education undermines this guru-shishya function. These feelings of shame may become

directed aggressively toward the self, causing death to the possibilities of growth through learning.

Neoliberal logics in education do not celebrate unique teacher expertise and relationships that nurture learning. Loss creates pain, and the struggles of this pain provide insights about transformative dynamics needed for learning. The consequences of neoliberalism eclipsing relationality and transformation bear examining, and I analyzed transferential loss as one path to do so.

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

In this essay, I have offered my personal account of learning, drawing upon psychoanalysis and the guru-shishya relationship. I contribute to scholarship on the learning relationship from the perspective of the shishya's processual experiences of mourning. I conceptualize transferential loss to emphasize my resistance to separation from the guru, to "equality" through disappearance of hierarchical roles. This inevitable detachment surfaces in Kakar (1995: 272-3):

> The "evolved beings" in India, including the most respected gurus, have always held that the guru, too, is only seemingly a person but is actually a function, a transitional object in modern parlance, as are all the various gods who are also only aspects of the self.

An implication of this analysis is that the shishya, the student-learner, at some point needs to find her/his/their own way. The guru is not to dominate, a potent insight to counter the misuse of the guru role for exploitation (e.g. Raina, 2002). With my account, I analyze the losses of this process and its meanings for neoliberalizing educational contexts.

My case study draws together Indian scholarship (Kakar, 2008), Freudian foundations (e.g. Freud, A. 1966; Freud, S. 1911-1913), and psychoanalytic work in management on holding spaces and containment (e.g. French, 1997; Petriglieri, Wood, & Petriglieri, 2011), to demonstrate the centrality of the guru's transitional function for me to learn. Kakar's (1995)

mention of a transitional object indicates the work of Winnicott, who conceived of the transitional object as "an intermediate area of *experiencing*… a resting-place" (Winnicott, 1953: 90, original emphasis), to help with anxiety. This place evokes the *safety net* provided by the guru (Raina, 2002). My case disclosure indicates that this transitional place, as experienced through the relations of transference to a guru during learning, is not one of pampering and spoiling. Rather, a transitional place for learning provides safety to fail, through a balance of care with criticism (Vince & Gabriel, 2011). This relational experience supports readiness for anxieties of newness (Vince, 1998), and actualizes learning beyond University content and institutional objectives.

The figure of a guru who does not impose ideas, and provides space for working through anxieties and vulnerability central to learning, speaks to critical management education concerns about power and hierarchy in teaching. I contribute my account to argue that an unequal relationship, as I theorize with transference and the guru-shishya, may cultivate learning through *transformation*. My essay thus offers points of reflection for critical management education (e.g. Reynolds, 1999; Reynolds & Vince, 2004; Perriton, 2014; Śliwa, Sørensen, & Cairns, 2015; Vince, 2010). This transformation through love challenges "standardized and often meaningless evaluation exercises"[5] formalized by commercial logics in educational settings.

Theorizing transferential loss, I contribute to psychoanalytic work which has analyzed the importance of unconscious processes for management and organizational learning (Petriglieri, Wood, & Petriglieri, 2011; Vince, 2011), including a focus in psychoanalysis on *transference* for relational learning (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001; French, 1997). Transferential loss also offers a contribution to psychoanalytic debates about the use of transference outside of a clinical context (Frosh & Baraitser, 2008; Frosh, 2010). With my

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case study, I advocate for the richness of transference for analyzing emotions of learning and teacher-student encounters (French, 1997; Neki, 1973).

With this autobiographical analysis, I contribute to the application of transference research in management and organization scholarship. Fotaki (2006) illuminates the problematic introduction of the presumed ideal of patient choice for transferential-countertransferential processes in doctor-patient relationships. I offer my analysis as an appeal for such transference analyses to be extended to higher education and other learning contexts affected by neoliberal logics.

Management research with transference has emphasized the role of researchers as experts, centering the analysis on researchers' countertransference, receiving others' transferences (Baum, 1994; Czander & Eisold, 2003; Diamond & Allcorn, 2003; Arnaud, 2012). With this case disclosure, I analyze my own transferences with love and loss, as a *subordinate in relation to a person in authority*, rather than as a researcher with formal status. I also offer a different transference approach by focusing on the changes of a learning relationship with one person over an extended period of time, in contrast to reflections by experts upon time-bounded organizational visits.

Offering this case study, I emphasize the need to think about our own vulnerabilities. My disclosure stresses the *unconscious* aspects of relationships in unequal dyads. My account supports scholarship about academics' experiences and reflexivity (e.g. Brewis, 2005; Kenny, 2012; Prasad, 2013). When researchers share their experiences in formalized academic outlets, scholarship is humanized by challenging illusions of objectivity, demonstrating that we are not greater or other than what we teach and research.

This essay provides an autobiographical case study of transference within a guru-shishya dyad, to enrich emotional understandings of learning. My personal account connects emotional processes in dyads such as transferences and anxieties to wider political changes in

higher education and learning. It is possible that transferential loss may occur in other relationships, such as unexpected interruptions to relational learning. Instances of such disruptions include departure of a teacher to another institution, staff or student illness, non-renewal of temporary contracts, or job loss through compulsory redundancies. These dyadic breakages in contemporary educational contexts bear further examining in management literature, for their effects upon our learning potential and communities in which we are embedded.

CONCLUDING:
SUMMARIZING ESSAY PURPOSE,
REFLECTING ON IMPLICATIONS FOR LOVE AND LEARNING

In writing from the heart, and about heartbreak, I offered this essay with the hope for discussions of love and loss in management scholarship to continue, and to generate new beginnings. This essay is a project of writing against mainstream conventions, in order to offer a tribute of love to a treasured teacher, and to make sense of my loss and its ramifications. As I began to feel grief for the learning relationship, I started connecting to transference to analyze my loss. I realized that I could offer an autobiographical case study demonstrating the importance of transference in a learning context.

My purpose in this essay has been to draw upon transference, to theorize transferential loss, working with my own account to scrutinize how neoliberalized education violently excludes relationality and love. Carrying this micro-level focus forward, I question *what we may be losing* when learning contexts do not nurture opportunities for teacher-student processual learning. These processes include the challenges of beginnings and endings, themselves crucial sources of learning.

Conveying the liberating potential of psychoanalysis has been another aim of my project. This writing about transferential loss has been emancipatory, offering the ability to

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share my love for the guru and work through pain. Progressing through the mourning process helped me to realize that movement toward "equal" relating does not need to undermine the guru-shishya cherished training, for the unconscious continues to carry these experiences. Transferential loss helped me to understand how struggles of mourning can clear new paths of understanding into contemporary dynamics, and can build resistance against trends violent to love. In these ways, psychoanalysis is not something to avoid, dismiss, or approach negatively (as has been viewed in some negative responses), but rather is a source of healing, strength, and meaning.

Letting go of this essay by ending this writing project also constitutes loss, and psychoanalysis offers healing resources to process this loss. This writing project and its ending have been accompanied by the *gift* of furthering my scholarly understanding, and my self-understanding about loss, in the reviewing process and offerings from the Editor and the Reviewers.

This essay is not advocating that one should look for guru–shishya dynamics in all authority relations, or that one must try to induce or change a particular type of transference. This is not the meaning and purpose of applying a psychoanalytic approach, which invites us to examine how transference and countertransference shape relationships. I also emphasize that this work is not a call for teachers in University education to overstretch themselves even further in a context of increasing stress, increasing rates of resigning from the pains and violence of academia, and so on. Instead, this case study is disclosed to argue for the urgency of structural transformations, so that energy of staff is not trapped in audit culture, in precarious contracts, in often punishing working conditions, liberated instead for unique, critically caring relationships with students. These relationships cannot be nurtured where neoliberal ideology imposes transactional logics, short-term contracts and goal capture as "learning", bereft of love.

In neoliberalized education, teachers and learners are disembodied, exchangeable economic pieces. I disclosed my experiences to write in challenge of these logics, advocating for appreciating the unique person of the teacher and of the learner. I found inspiration about this uniqueness from the guru-shishya dyad, in which "there is a symbolic cremation of earlier relationships – a rebirth with a forging of a new relationship in which the guru comes to establish not a proxied kinship with the disciple but a relation *sui generis*" (Neki, 1973: 761).

With my account, I take my stance explicitly and urgently for love: the need to have love for learning, love within learning, love in offering our learning. Discourses on satisfying students, on serving the needs of customers, on enhancing employability, are lacking in concern for the relationality of learning. These discourses exclude cultivating criticality in learning relationships through *love*, which is needed to work through learning anxieties, and strive to socially-transformative learning in support of communities.

The emotional impoverishment of market-based learning manifests the inhumanity of neoliberal logics, draining love. "Learning, as the Greeks realized, is ultimately a labour of love, for one's teacher, for one's community, for oneself and for truth; yet, love itself must be cultivated and developed through learning" (Antonacopoulou & Gabriel, 2001: 444-445). My autobiographical reflections stimulate questions about the consequences of neoliberalized education for love and learning:

If the teacher is not valued as one who prepares the student for complex questions, constructed instead as a bearer of student satisfaction, stripped of any guru ideals, where is the transferential source of learning?

Where is the core of the learning relationship, shaped by conscious and unconscious relational processes?

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Without the figure of a guru to guide students through vulnerability of learning,

without structural conditions that support this relational training, with the space to fail, and

critical care –

What is actually left in higher education?

Where is love?

And without love – where is learning?

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