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# TRANSFERENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL-MINDEDNESS IN TEACHERS

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## ABSTRACT

*The article is an argument for the relevance for our understanding of the pedagogic relationship of Freud's discovery of transference. Commonalities between teaching and psychoanalysis are reviewed prior to a discussion of how the concept of transference might be applied to teaching, particularly to improving the teacher's 'psychological-mindedness'. The article concludes by considering the moral/professional issue of teachers making use of the transference processes at work in their classrooms.*

*The main thing about schools is that they are one of the very few remaining public interactional spaces in which people are still engaged with each other in the reciprocal, though organisationally patterned, labour of producing meaning - indeed, the core meaning of self-identity (Wexler 1992: 10).*

## INTRODUCTION

Although Sigmund Freud left the question of the psychology of education largely to his daughter Anna (1931), scattered through his writings are fascinating linkages between psychoanalysis and pedagogy. Psychoanalytic psychotherapy is, he said, a kind of re-education (1910 [1909]). Then, reversing the direction of his attention, Freud said with regard to the psychodynamics of his own schoolboy years:

*"It is hard to decide whether what affected us more and was of greater importance to us was our concern with the sciences that we were taught or with the personalities of our teachers" (1914: 242).*

And, in his most famous comment on the subject of psychoanalysis and education, Freud said sadly and wisely in his very last book:

*It looks almost as if analysis were the third of those "impossible" professions*

*in which one can be sure beforehand of achieving unsatisfying results. The other two, which have been known much longer, are education and government (1937: 248).*

Since then, others have echoed and amplified Freud's analogy in a range of ways. For example, John Donald says in his book on education, popular culture, and politics that

*"the central enigma is the contingency and evanescence of both 'human nature' and 'the social'" (1992: 3 - 4).*

Charles B. Truax and R. R. Carkuff (1967), for their part, contend that fundamental and profound similarities exist amongst all interventive processes, from psychotherapy to education to the managerial interactions of employer and employee.

This article will argue that Freud's discovery of transference - the "best tool" of psychoanalysis - has considerable relevance to our understanding of the pedagogic relation. Commonalities between the impossible professions of teaching and psychoanalysis are reviewed prior to a discussion of how the concept of transference can be applied to the teacher's work. Two key ideas underpin this article. The first is that human behaviour is affectively motivated and that affect, like cognition, has a line of maturation (Basch 1988). The second key idea is well expressed in Ralph Waldo Emerson's observation that the "self is the sole subject we study and learn". Both these ideas have equal relevance to the two professions that are the subject of this article which goes on to suggest that understanding of transference processes can improve the teacher's "psychological-mindedness". The article concludes by considering the moral/professional issue of teachers making use of the transference processes in their classrooms.

## TRANSFERENCE

In answer to his own question "What are transferences?", Freud replied in his famous study of Dora that transferences are

*"new editions or facsimiles of the tendencies and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis...they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician" (1905 [1901]: 116).*

In other words, in the therapeutic setting patients routinely attribute to the therapist characteristics, attitudes, and feelings which are projections - features which do not belong to the therapist but are products of the patient's own internal world which are transferred onto the therapist. Freud found he was quite often cast in paternal or maternal roles by his patients.

In every psychoanalytic treatment of a neurotic patient the strange phenomenon that is known as "transference" makes its appearance. The patient, that is to say, directs towards the physician a degree of affectionate feeling (mingled, often enough, with hostility) which is based on no real relation between them and which - as is shown by every detail of its emergence - can only be traced back to old wishful phantasies of the patient's which have become unconscious (1910 [1909]: 51).

Over time Freud developed ways of interpreting and using the "transference neurosis" as an important vehicle of cure in psychoanalysis. Indeed, in the early days of psychoanalytic treatment, transference interventions by the analyst were geared to ensure the maximal development of the transference neurosis in order to reconstruct the development of psychic conflict in order that it could be dealt with consciously in therapy (1909: 209). Freud explained:

*We overcome the transference by pointing out to the patient that his feelings do not arise from the present situation and do not apply to the person of the doctor, but that they are repeating something that happened to him earlier....By that means the transference, which, whether affectionate or hostile, seemed in every case to constitute the greatest threat to the treatment, becomes its best tool, by whose help the most secret compartments of mental life can be opened (Freud, 1917 [1916-1917]: 443 - 444).*

Much has been written on the complexities of the transference phenomenon over the past eighty years. Many definitions, descriptions, and differences of opinion have been presented in order to better understand the phenomenon and hone its use in analysis. That controversy continues about the nature and use of transference is evident in a recent study by Virginia Turnbull (1996). She found that long-term psychoanalytic therapists value transference more highly and use it more consistently than do short-term therapists, who tend to foster a generalised positive transference or report a resistance to its use as a therapeutic tool. The pivotal nature of transference to most psychoanalytic therapy, however, remains a major theme in the literature. Examples of this are Greg Ulmer's (1987) opinion that there is no cure in psychoanalysis without transference, and Michael F. Basch's (1988) description of transference as the heart of dynamic (insight) therapy. Transference has the important dual roles of "propulsive power" for, and "ultimate resistance" to, the therapy (Stone 1997: 118).

Basch (1988) views his patients' transferences as characteristic (but unconscious) counterproductive programs for relationships that cannot be dealt with directly by either the patient or the therapist. Eventually these pathological behaviour patterns find their way into the therapeutic relationship, giving the therapist the opportunity to help the patient to recognise and resolve or at least ameliorate them. In the transference, a patient relives, in a somewhat disguised form, the effects of trauma. The trauma may have prematurely halted the patient's affective development, ie., self protection systems took precedence over learning. Indications of how the patient was affectively traumatised appear in the form and the content of the transference. Basch follows Heinz Kohut's (1984) self psychology according to which the analyst may identify a "mirror transference" when the patient seeks to be validated by the therapist's approval or an "alter ego transference" if the patient seeks the therapist's friendship. Alternatively, an "idealising transference" may be detected if the patient admires the therapist as a powerful helper who can provide strength and protection. Having identified the form of the transference, the therapist can then add information about the content. The patient's need for mirroring (or idealising, etc.) arises in the context of psychosexual issues and may relate to the oral,

anal, or phallic phases that Freud described, or the content may reveal other attachment or affective needs.

Knowledge about transference and the ways it can be used in psychoanalytic psychotherapy continues to evolve. Gregory P. Bauer (1993) describes a modification of Freud's technique which he calls analysis of "transference in the here and now". Often referred to simply as "here-and-now work", this approach strives to understand the current therapeutic relationship and use this to illuminate the patient's relationship patterns, both negative and positive. While Bauer agrees with Freud that transference does shed valuable light on the patient's primal relationship patterns, he also argues that

*"the transference response always has a plausible basis in the here and now"* (1993: 132).

Bauer is respectful of the transference neurosis and outlines in great detail the pros and cons of using here-and-now work. The circumstances in which it is likely to be productive are described, as are some circumstances in which the use (or overuse) of here-and-now work could be counterproductive, eg at times of extreme stress for the patient such as a tragic accident, the death of a loved one, or the loss of a job. In times such as these, transference, while always there, is best treated as "the ground", ie acknowledged by the analyst, but not focused on or attended to until the period of crisis is over.

Other permutations of the transference are described by Bauer: the unobjectionable positive transference (also known as the basic or mature transference); the hostile transference; the erotic transference; transference residue; extratransference; countertransference. Of these, the last – countertransference – is the most significant in the literature. According to Paula Heimann (1950), countertransference refers to all the feelings which the analyst experiences towards the patient. Heimann acknowledges that her definition is very broad and that the narrower, more specific view of countertransference as the psychoanalyst's pathological responses to the patient – the negative view of countertransference – is still preferred by many in the field. We return to this theme later. Heimann was one of the first to view the analyst's countertransference in a positive light and propose its potential value as

*"an instrument of research into the patient's unconscious"* (1950: 81)

instead of seeing countertransference as an unwelcome, phenomenon that the analyst should recognise and master so that it does not disturb the patient's progress. Debate on all matters relating to transference and countertransference continues in the literature.

Freud said that transference is not created by the analytic situation, but

*"arises spontaneously in all human relationships"* (1910 [1909]: 51).

This, together with Basch's agreement that "transference is ubiquitous" (1988: 134) and Joseph Sandler's confirming view that "transference elements enter to a varying degree into all relationships" (1976: 44), lends support to our earlier assertion that transference is also a factor in educational settings. Some of the literature that describes the nature of the transference phenomenon in teacher/student relationships is reviewed in the next section.

## TRANSFERENCE IN EDUCATION

Robert Con Davis (1987b) presents the view that the problematics of psychoanalysis – repression, resistance, and transference – are also the problematics of teaching. He suggests that the history of psychoanalysis can be viewed as a sustained attempt to elaborate a theory of the human subject - ie what we know, and how we know it – and that this attempt has had an enduring influence on teaching since Freud's publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). Davis proposes using the psychoanalytic model for a pedagogy based on an inherently dynamic relation to knowledge rather than the more traditional emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and cognitive development. In such a pedagogy, the teacher's role would be to

*"help students situate themselves in a certain relation to knowledge"* (1987b: 749).

Davis backgrounds his proposed pedagogy by describing the split that divides Freudian theory, a split so profound that it suggests to him the existence of "two Freuds":

1. an "American Freud" of ego psychology which emerged after 1920; and
2. a "French Freud" as elaborated by Jacques Lacan. This pre-1920 Freud focuses not on the ego, the super-ego, and the id (the so called "second topography"), but on the

earlier trinity of the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious.

To Davis these two Freuds suggest two very different approaches to pedagogy.

1. The "ego Freud" promotes teaching as information transmittal and cognitive education. Students need to learn about the world and about strategies for ego defence; the student in this pedagogy is, according to Davis, "one in training as an ego defender" (1987b: 752). The ego is seen as the conflict negotiator and as well as the representative, or the essence, of the whole person. This pedagogy is based on Freud's statement about the efforts of psychoanalysis:

*Its intention is...to strengthen the ego, to make it more independent of the super-ego, to widen its field of perception and enlarge its organisation, so it can appropriate fresh portions of the id. Where id was, there ego shall be. It is a work of culture (1933 [1932]: 80).*

Schools, as centres of cultural transmission, provide teachers as the repositories of knowledge which must be conveyed to the students, whose role it is to be receptive to the instruction.

2. In contrast to the ego Freud is Lacan's "French Freud" or "semiotic Freud" who promotes an ideological understanding of pedagogy where the notions of resistance and transference have application to teaching and learning. Davis discusses how a teacher may function - like the analyst - as the subject who is "supposed/presumed to know" and how the student may either
  - (a) find his/her own relation to knowledge or
  - (b) be oppressed by the authoritative subject presumed to know/teacher, and get lost or subsumed in someone else's language.

The concepts of "subject" and "unconscious discourse" are important in this Lacanian view of Freud. Davis invites us to see Lacan's unconscious as being similar to the way "speakers are unconscious of grammar - hence the unconscious as structured like a language". The science of positioning is central to this

semiotic Freud pedagogy. The way students relate to, or are positioned by, discourse is of importance. The discourse is unconscious, and when the student projects the teacher as being the subject who is supposed/presumed to know a transference is effected in which the student endows the teacher with the power and prestige of the entire semiotic system. The teacher, subject to this transference, presents knowledge as a kind of bait which promises everything and lures the student into the recognition of their unconscious discourse. In this pedagogy, ideally, the student learns to produce, rather than merely repeat, language. This pedagogy, according to Ulmer (1987), attacks the narrowly cognitive understanding of teaching and emphasises the production of meaning over the end product.

Davis (1987a) discusses the resistance to language, and everything that is structured like a language, that he suggests both psychoanalysis and teaching attempt to address. Freud highlighted the resistance as a blockage, or undoing, that is required for the doing of everything that is structured like a language. Davis reminds us of Freud's view that resistance was a kind of rewriting and the fact that Freud compared dreams with a system of writing. Davis supports the argument that the resistance to reading and teaching is also the force that makes them possible - students must fail before they succeed. Teachers, however, may find the idea of resistance to language a paradox because they, like Socrates, come to teaching through a compulsion to speak or as M. Robert Gardner puts it, because they are driven by "the furore to teach" (1994: 3-10).

Robert Brooke advocates the use of "response teaching", a technique introduced by Peter Elbow (1986) and Donald Murray (1985) in which the only method the teacher of writing uses to assist students is to provide nondirective feedback during one-to-one or small group conferences. How, Brooke asks, can Murray obtain good results working with writers for only five minutes? Brooke's answer is that response teaching works because they enact fundamental unconscious processes. Lacan's theory of transference is a powerful model for understanding why response teaching works. According to Lacan (1977) it works like this - in the development of the Self there exists a conscious Subject and an unconscious Other. Therefore the student, like all humans, is split. On one side of this "divided self" is the

conscious person who seeks to understand some aspect of his/her own baffling behaviour, eg, a phobia (in the analytic situation) or how to diagnose errors and proceed with a writing project (in the student situation). On the other side of the divided self is the unconscious Other who seeks an authority figure, one who is supposed/presumed to know how to interpret the behaviour of the conscious self and be able to provide guidance. Although the student projects his/her unconscious need/lack/desire onto the teacher, the important relationship is largely within the divided person, ie between the conscious self and its projection. Brooke claims that the teacher's nondirective feedback helps facilitate this process of projection and response.

Teachers who believe that the writing process is a journey of discovery may benefit from using a pedagogy that leads students to confront their (process of) writing in the same way that analysts lead their patients to confront their (process of) desire. Both procedures involve language as the central activity: in analysis the "talking cure", in composition classes the "writing process". The freewriting and brainstorming aspects of writing can be compared to the free association aspect of analysis. The self is made from, largely, social symbols and writing is a process of exploration of self through symbols. Writing, for the "response teacher", is not a form of therapy, it is, like analysis, a way of living – a style of being human.

Gregory S. Jay also dismisses the narrowly cognitive, conventional view of teaching which positions teachers in the role of masterful subject. This, he says, makes them "imposters", as the dubious teacher role is the result of the effects of transference. He supports a Lacanian nonmagisterial pedagogy because he claims that the inevitable transference involved in traditional teaching effectively stymies critical thinking by inculcating a "relationship of identification" (1987: 785) instead of analysis. To Jay, education should be something more than socialisation or consumption. The teacher's primary task, in his view, is to bring unconscious thoughts (or resistances to thoughts) to discourse. In support of his view, Jay refers to Shoshana Felman who says:

*"Teaching, like analysis, has to deal not so much with lack of knowledge (or ignorance) as with resistances to knowledge" (1982: 30).*

Felman bases this view on Freud's reminder that the root of the patient's ignorance is inner resistance and that the task of treatment lies in combating these resistances (1910a: 225), and on Lacan's suggestion that ignorance – the desire to ignore knowledge - is one of the three fundamental passions (the others being love and hate. Lacan, 1953-1954: 271)

Felman, using Freud and Lacan's statements to explore this idea further, suggests a novel way of viewing the relationship between knowledge and ignorance and their place in learning. Ignorance is not simply opposed to knowledge; it is an integral part of the structure of knowledge. Ignorance can be said to be a kind of forgetting or forgetfulness, while learning could, in a way, be thought of as remembering. Viewed this way, ignorance is tied up with repression and is an active state of negation, a refusal to admit to knowledge. Ignorance can, therefore, become "instructive" in the revolutionary pedagogy that Felman (1982: 29) maintains was discovered by Freud, and developed by Lacan. This pedagogy, exemplified by Lacan's own teaching/living/writing "style" seeks to, in Lacan's own words,

*"to make psychoanalysis and education collapse into each other" (in Felman 1982: 38).*

Deborah P. Britzman (1999) argues that there can be no learning or teaching without anxiety. And Ann Murphy (1989), describing her own work with adult remedial students, is only too aware of the formidable array of resistances, fears, angers, and traumas that writing teachers can uncover as they attempt to guide their students towards "finding their own voice" and expressing ideas, reactions, beliefs, opinions, and feelings that have not been sought in the past or valued. Her adult literacy students frequently bring to class painful past experiences of failure and defeat at the hands of educators, in addition to an almost primal guilt at moving beyond their parents' educational level and leaving their familial language behind. Such students can respond to teachers in deeply conflicted, ambivalent ways that display all the signs of transference, resistance and projection so familiar to psychotherapists.

Although Murphy is an advocate of Freud's astute recognition of the deep structural resonances between pedagogy and psychoanalysis, she warns of accepting the

analogy too completely. She cites Felman's view that while analysis may be a pedagogical experience, teaching is not a purely psychoanalytic one. The difference in numbers (1:1 in analysis and 1:20+ in many teaching settings) is but one obvious example of a way that teaching does not resemble analysis. The compulsory nature of much of the education system is another. The analogy further falters, in Murphy's view, as we are asked to consider the nature of some of the intensely and explosively personal material that writing classes can produce as students are provoked into writing with an increasingly "authentic voice". While they may be psychologically and institutionally empowered to elicit such volatile material, she warns that teachers have neither the training nor the context to handle the possible consequences of it. Although transference is a universal phenomenon, it is also the hardest part of therapeutic treatment (Bird 1972). Rather than use transference as a therapist would, Murphy recommends only that teachers recognise and reflect on the fact that more is going on than we can fully know or respond to appropriately in the classroom. Her concerns regarding the overt use of the transference relationship in the classroom is elaborated in the next section of this article.

Christina Murphy's (1989) belief in the transformative power of language (of "healing words") is central to her likening of the roles of writing tutor and psychoanalyst. She is not so sure that the analogy extends to all teachers, especially those whose job it is to convey information to large classes. To Murphy, the tutor's role is primarily supportive and affective, with the establishment of a unique one-to-one interpersonal relationship being a core duty. As in psychoanalysis, it is the quality of that relationship that determines the success or failure of the whole enterprise. Both types of work, in her view, are about behaviour change – improved written expression in one case, and improved personal interactions in the other. A further similarity she highlights is that many of the people who enlist the services of both analysts and writing tutors are "hurt". Her students are hurt as a result of their negative experiences in the education system, and display a range of behaviour patterns of inhibiting anxiety, self-doubt, defeat, and negative cognition. They may be fearful that they will receive more of the judgmental or abusive treatment they have already experienced from teachers and their peers. They may doubt not

only their ability to write, but also their ability even to learn. In order to help her mature students effect the sort of behaviour change they desire; Murphy looks to "the talking cure" – to psychoanalysis – to guide her pedagogy.

Arthur W. Frank (1995) addresses himself to a problem mentioned by Christina Murphy above: lecturing and transference. He ponders the self-posed question of why both he and his audiences find his one-off lectures so moving and celebrative while his ongoing university course lectures are experienced as mundane and unsatisfying by comparison. Frank's answer lies in the way transference operates in each of the types of lecture. In his ongoing course lectures, he and his students spend considerable amounts of time together – time that allows for the development of the transference phenomenon in a way that is somewhat analogous to the psychoanalytic situation, whereas the one-off lecture is relieved of this burden. His analogy, which rests on the relation between speech and silence, is a reversal of Roland Barthes' (1977) notion that the lecturer (the speaker) is positioned in the role of analysand, and the student (the listener) adopts the position of the analyst. Frank turns this around arguing that, although the lecturer talks, like the analyst he or she does not say what the students desire to hear: the lecturer never reveals the truth of him or herself or of the students themselves. As Lacan has argued, the patient's desire can never be fulfilled - this is the major lesson of the therapy. The notion of the lecture hall or classroom as a "transference-laden environment" may certainly go some way to explaining the perplexing and complex nature of the pedagogic relation that is so much pondered over in the field of education. Frank's article, with its descriptions (borrowed from Kierkegaard) of lecturers as undercover agents/smugglers/policemen also proposes an ideal student metaphor of

*"students as editors of their own lives"*  
(1995: 33).

This metaphor refers to independent, self-directed learners, a notion that will be returned to later in this article.

Ronald Schleifer (1987) outlines Paul de Man's purely cognitive view of teaching (the conveyance of pre-existing objects of knowledge from teacher to student) in order to elaborate and contrast with his own view. Whereas de Man, he says, dismissed the intersubjective (and,

therefore, the transferential) nature of the pedagogical relationship –

*"the only teaching worthy of the name is scholarly, not personal" (de Man, 1982: 3) –*

Schleifer claims that teaching, like language acquisition itself, is a process of trial and error, guidance, and working through. Teaching is a process where the intersubjective functions equally as forcefully as the cognitive. Further, it is a process in which both teacher and student (or parent and child) can be not wholly conscious of, or fully intending, the education that takes place. As such, Schleifer describes the process as discursive rather than cognitive.

This discursive process is both essential and problematic for teaching, and vitally important to psychoanalysis which seeks to uncover unconscious impulses in patterns of discourse and enunciation, ie the unconscious is acted out on the surface of discourse. Schleifer suggests that Freud was not only a man of great literary culture, but also a semiotician – one intent on reading all the signs produced by humans, and that Lacan was the follower who best understood Freud's semiotic message.

## **SHOULD TRANSFERENCE BE DIRECTLY USED?**

As indicated by Frank (1995), transference relationships take time to build and time to resolve. Even though he warns that transference resolution requires separation - the ending of the illusion of plenitude, and the acceptance that both parties will be left painfully aware of their lack – he still tentatively commends the task to his fellow educators. He is urging teachers to experiment with an out-of-their-comfort-zone type of pedagogy which could, ideally, produce greatly more independent learners at much earlier ages. It fits well, too, with the Platonic notion that "truth is unteachable" and Oscar Wilde's famous jibe that "nothing worth learning can be taught". It is also, perhaps, a pedagogy that reflects the teaching/learning styles of Freud and Lacan, as interpreted by Felman. She suggests (1982: 40) that the reason Freud and Lacan were both such extraordinary teachers is because they were both quite extraordinary learners. One would not, however, expect such a pedagogy to be widely popular; indeed, one can envisage opposition from a number of quarters, although this is not a reason to abandon further

consideration of it. Even though teachers may come to recognise the existence and the potential power of the transference relationships in their classes they may be justly wary of the implications of its use.

Ann Murphy, whose work with adult remedial writing students was reviewed earlier, is such an educator. She is ambivalent, to say the least, about whether the transference and resistance phenomena she so readily recognises in her often fragile remedial students should be directly used as a teaching tool, even though this latent psychological aspect of her work often threatens to overthrow the cognitive dimension. While readily accepting that teaching, particularly the teaching of writing, elicits some of the same powerful energies of transference and resistance that psychoanalysis does, she strenuously warns teachers against too ready an acceptance of an intellectually and linguistically beguiling Lacanian theory of pedagogy, especially if it prompts them go "untrained" to experiment in the classroom. Murphy reminds us that psychoanalysts and psychotherapists, unlike teachers, undergo their own arduous analysis and spend their professional lives studying the complex body of work that started with Freud a century ago, and is still evolving in an impressively robust way. In contrast, teacher training focuses more on the cognitive and curriculum content aspects of classroom practice, rather than on the deep psychological matters that pertain to pedagogy. Murphy asks educators to consider the potentially ungovernable forces that may be unleashed if "ill-trained pseudo-analysts" (teachers) - Freud warned against "wild" analysis (1910a) - act as though the analogy between psychoanalysis and pedagogy is a simple reality. Analogies, after all, highlight similarities but tend to ignore differences. The differences, in this case, include the "contract" that is understood between the analysand and the analyst that an open-ended exploration of the analysand's psyche is their work, and that work can be terminated at any time by the analysand. This is very different from the situation of students, especially students who are locked into the compulsory education system for at least a dozen years, without the adult power to choose their school, their classroom, or their teacher, and certainly without the power to terminate the arrangement. In Murphy's opinion, the darker, more conflicted aspects of the power relationship discrepancies in the pedagogy/psychoanalysis analogy have yet to be addressed. It is for this



reason that she says, "we cannot directly use resistance and defence mechanisms to aid our work" (1989: 187).

Murphy's thoughtful article does, however, highlight that teachers (whether or not they directly use the transference) need to be psychologically minded (Appelbaum 1973) in order to come to an appreciation of the complexities of their profession. Some of the ways teachers may do this in their classroom practice are explored in the next section.

## **PRODUCING PSYCHOLOGICAL-MINDEDNESS IN TEACHERS**

We subscribe to the following definition of psychological-mindedness:

*A tendency to understand or explain behaviour in psychological terms, that is, to view behaviour as expressing and communicating information about the needs, wishes, purposes, intentions, conflicts, defensive strategies, etc., of the person in question, oneself or another. According to this definition, the explanation offered may or may not be correct (Wolitzky and Reuben 1974: 26).*

While psychological-mindedness is not sufficient condition for being a good teacher - social-awareness and moral-consciousness, as well as subject knowledge and sound technical training are obviously also crucial - it is in our opinion a necessary condition. Psychological-mindedness cannot be instilled in those who show no tendency in this direction, but it may be developed. It is our contention that an understanding of transference processes can give the psychologically minded teacher the theoretical grounding necessary to make his or her empathic attunement with students more coherent and systematic.

At the start of this article Freud was quoted as wondering whether he and his classmates were influenced more by the knowledge they were taught or by they personalities of their teachers. This is how he continued that thought:

It is true, at least, that this second concern was a perpetual undercurrent in all of us, and that in many of us the path to the sciences led only

through our teachers. Some of us stopped halfway along that path and for a few - why not admit as much? - It was on that account blocked for good and all (1914: 242).

If it is true that -for good and bad - transference processes exist in the classroom, then what is their relative potency? Leaving aside individual differences, it would seem that the pedagogic setting is very likely to set up quasi-parental relationships and thus the transference. Classroom transference, to mix metaphors, can be expected to be less concentrated than in psychotherapy, but somewhat more pressing than in non-institutional everyday life.

And if transference is a fact of classroom life, what does this mean for the teacher? The knowledge of educational transferences raises ethical and professional issues which we deal with briefly here. Let us consider three approaches to making use of the transference in the classroom.

1. Indirect use of the transference. This would require that teachers be vigilantly mindful of transference issues, but use them only in the sense that these would inform their practice rather than actively employ them. In the psychoanalytic literature this is known as making a "silent interpretation". The analyst may decide that the time is not right to make a full verbal interpretation to the patient, but the very formulation of an interpretation in the analyst's mind can have therapeutic "holding" (Modell 1976) or "containing" effects if, for example, the patient senses that the analyst understands or that the analyst does not find the patient's condition overwhelming. The following example may help to illustrate this option. A primary school teacher notes that a child is particularly approval seeking, not only with regard to schoolwork but also in wanting to help with classroom organisational tasks, playground duty, etc. Sometimes the child inadvertently calls the teacher "mum". In situations like this, it can be very easy for a busy teacher to gratefully accept the offers of assistance from enthusiastic little helpers. But the psychologically-minded teacher, may become aware that a strong projection and transference is operating for the child, and so might politely refuse the help and gently redirect the child into activities with peers. A verbal expression of the teacher's hypothesis is not made, but the teacher's

silent interpretation enables the teacher to move beyond commonsense reactions and towards helping the child. This routine may have to be repeated by the teacher a number of times before the child changes and becomes a more self-reliant and independent learner.

2. Direct use of the transference. A university lecturer is upbraided in a tutorial by a student who demands to know why the lecturer doesn't just tell them what they need to know; why do they have to wrestle with the topic at hand in this inefficient way? The lecturer says: "It is disturbing to be uncertain. You believe that I have all the answers and by withholding my knowledge I am not feeding you properly. Perhaps you are feeling the vulnerability we all experience growing up. The frustrations of becoming independent can seem needless and even cruel." Here the lecturer is providing an interpretation which links the student's present predicament with past experiences of individuation. Note that the lecturer doesn't defend or deny, placate or reassure the student. Like the therapist, the lecturer hopes that providing an interpretation will help the student feel understood and also make the vulnerability tolerable (Arlow 1989).
3. Listening like a therapist. Above we made mention of Brooke's analysis of the effectiveness of Murray's response teaching - meeting with writers for very short periods. What is the format of such a meeting?

Stereotype of a Donald Murray conference:

1. *Enter student, with new paper.*
2. *Murray: "Tell me about it." The student does.*
3. *Murray: "Show me what you like in this." The student does. Murray nods.*
4. *Murray: "Show me where you're least comfortable." The student does. Murray nods.*
5. *Murray: "What are you going to do to overcome these problems?" The student explores some alternatives. Murray nods.*

6. *Exit student - refreshed and eager to write (Brooke 1987: 679).*

Brooke argues that response teaching or nondirective feedback strategies work because they connect with some basic psychodynamic processes. The similarity between the above student teacher conference and a psychotherapeutic session is clear: the student/patient talks while the teacher/therapist listens. This is the "blank screen" or "neutrality" of the psychoanalytic psychotherapist; it is not cold or aloof, it is warm and engaged without gratifying the student through making either encouraging or critical comments (Newman 1992). The best description of analytic listening is Theodore Reik's *Listening with the Third Ear* (1948).

We provide the above scenarios not as recommendations but as illustrations of how teachers might employ the knowledge of the therapist. Of course, in more or less systematic ways teachers do some of this 'naturally' anyway. Almost every day in practically every school one can hear a teacher say something like, "Is Jack playing up in your class too? His parents are splitting up so let's keep an eye on him and give him some space for a while." Here the teacher's experience and intuition tell her that students carry their personal problems around with them, and that it will be both reassuring and freeing for the student to sense the teacher's empathy from a distance.

What specific and manifest knowledge drawn from the psychotherapeutic relationship can do for teachers is the following. First, understanding that pedagogy is in large part constituted by the teacher-student relationship can help teachers to be more psychologically minded. In part, this involves letting go of blame. Of course, sometimes people are to blame and must be held responsible for their actions. But, in the over-worked world of the school, teachers are too often prone to blame either the student (a bad or mad child) or themselves. The teacher will be provided with much food for thought if he or she asks of all notable events in the classroom, big or small, Why is this student/why am I reacting in this way?

This brings us to the second point about teachers and transference: countertransference. Knowledge about countertransference should

help to make teachers both more insightful and more cautious about the employment of psychoanalytic knowledge. From the very start of psychoanalysis, though, countertransference has had both a positive and a negative sense. Countertransference in the positive sense refers to the feelings, thoughts, images stirred up in the therapist by the patient (Racker 1968). Psychoanalysts have noticed that the patient projects into the analyst elements of the patient's internal life and that the analyst will actually experience these. For example, despite the superficially pleasant talk of the patient, the therapist feels an unaccountably sad; perhaps in subtle ways this feeling has been induced in the therapist by the patient. Countertransference has proven to be an invaluable tool for gaining insight into the patient's world. Encouraging this sensitive, intuitive aspect of therapeutic work, Freud said that the analyst must

*"turn his own unconscious like a receptive organ towards the transmitting unconscious of the patient. He must adjust himself to the patient as a telephone receiver is adjusted to the transmitting microphone" (1912: 115 - 116).*

But, Freud also spoke of countertransference in a negative sense. When the analyst becomes aware of "the patient's influence on his unconscious feelings...we are most inclined to insist that he shall recognize this counter-transference in himself and overcome it" (1910b: 144 - 145) through self-analysis or further personal treatment. Here countertransference is an unwelcome, interfering element in the treatment. In an attempt to create some terminological clarity around this issue it might be preferable to call countertransference in the negative sense "the therapist's own transference", and to reserve the term countertransference for that which is projected into the therapist by the patient. The therapist should always wonder whether what he or she is experiencing "belongs" to the therapist or to the patient. In exactly the same way, the teacher cannot assume that everything odd in the pedagogic relationship is an attribute of the student. Inevitably the teacher will also be transferring onto the student material from the teacher's own life. The teacher is not trained to make this difficult distinction. This is where Ann Murphy's (1989) cautionary words are to be taken seriously. D.W. Winnicott's (1947) concept of hate in the countertransference is instructive here. Winnicott said that the analyst

has many good reasons to hate and fear the psychotic patient. It is crucial that the analyst not deny these feelings in him or herself - there lie blame and attribution of labels. Instead the analyst must acknowledge that these most difficult feelings are a joint production: the patient has projected something of his or her mental world into the analyst, and these projections have resonated with something in the analyst's personality. The equivalent task lies before the teacher who finds him or herself stirred up uncomfortably by a student.

## CONCLUSION

A conundrum. Teachers should be and to various degrees -usually unwittingly - are psychologically minded. The psychoanalytic concept of transference can enable the teacher to be more consistent in his or her understanding of the teacher-student interaction as a deep interpersonal relationship. But that very knowledge could also be used by the teacher to objectify the student, this time cloaked in psychoanalytic jargon. The responsibility is on the teacher to inquire continually and honestly into what part he or she is playing in the pedagogic relationship, without succumbing to either projective labelling or paralysing self-criticism.

This article has argued that the analogy Freud postulated earlier this century of psychoanalysis and pedagogy is still relevant to the teachers of today and, indeed, to the teachers of tomorrow. Some of the literature relating to transference in both psychoanalytical and educational contexts has been reviewed. It has been asserted that an understanding of transference can develop the teacher's psychological-mindedness. Finally, the ethical/professional issue of whether or not the phenomenon of transference can and should be used as a teaching tool has been explored.

We end this article with a further comment by Freud with regard to his relationship and that of his peers to their schoolteachers:

*These men, not all of whom were in fact fathers themselves, became our substitute fathers....*

*We transferred onto them the respect and expectations attaching to the omniscient father of our childhood, and we then began to treat them as we treated our fathers at home. We confronted them with the ambivalence*

*that we had acquired in our own families and with its help we struggled with them as we had been in the habit of struggling with our fathers in the flesh. Unless we take into account our nurseries and our family homes, our behaviour to our schoolmasters would not only be incomprehensible but inexcusable (1914: 244).*

The teacher needs to undertake the same kind of analysis of the relationships with his or her students.

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