

The Dreamwork of Transformation in Teacher Education

KARYN SANDLOS

University of Illinois at Chicago

BRIAN CASEMORE

George Washington University

H. JAMES GARRETT

University of Georgia

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE ENGAGES THE LIMITS of the stories we tell ourselves in teacher education through the idea/image/metaphor/vantage of dreams and dreaming. Ever since the publication of Freud's (1900) *Interpretation of Dreams*, the status of dreams and dreaming has persisted in inquiry as a means to resist—through practices of analysis, interpretation, and social critique—our most taken for granted understandings of ourselves and others. Freud (1914/2001) argued that dreams act as “the guardian of sleep” (p. 38), allowing us to become conversant with parts of ourselves that are difficult to know or accept. Pinar's (2004) reference to the contemporary landscape of educational reform as “the nightmare that is the present” inaugurates his book, *What is Curriculum Theory?* (p. 5). Ta-Nehisi Coates' (2015) elaboration of “The Dream,” in *Between the World and Me*, identifies national mythologies of race as structuring the persistence of white supremacy. Following in this tradition of scholarship on dreams, the writers in this special issue demonstrate that dreamwork—as understood through psychoanalysis, social theory, and curriculum studies—complicates the subjective and social dimensions of teacher education, expanding the sphere of teaching and our sense of the teacher as subject.

In this issue, we ask: What can we make of the various versions of dreaming if we use them to think anew about our work in the spaces of teacher education? A linear theory of learning predominates the structures and features of most teacher education programs. The focus typically resides in the terrain of explicit pedagogical exchange: unit and lesson plans about mandated curricular topics, ways of engaging students' interest in order to maximize academic achievement, cultural relevance of classroom spaces, teaching for social justice, and so on. Within the framework of linearity, teacher educators risk operating within a narrowed sense of the teacher-subject they are teaching, and at the same time, the students risk a narrowed sense of the teacher they are working to become.

The eight papers in this issue explore the limits of the linear and the literal in the dynamics of pedagogical exchange, asking: What versions of the dream, dreamers, and dreaming structure the scene of teacher education? What happens in teacher education when experience meets something other than our idealizations, expectations, and anticipated outcomes? The papers examine, in various ways, what occurs when dreams in teacher education meet the realities of curriculum and professional life. Whether the transformative desires of teacher educators and preservice teachers are structured by anti-racist, social justice, reconceptualist, or “basic-skills” outcomes, there is always another story being told. These “other” stories constitute the dreamwork of teacher education.

Dreamwork and teacher education have in common the capacity to bring students into contact with themselves and other people in transitional states of human subjectivity and learning. In this issue, attention to the dreamwork of teacher education offers insight into the ways in which professional knowledge and experience are shaped by social and psychical experiences of non-linearity, vulnerability, omnipotence, suffering, hope, and transformation. The scholars featured in this special issue have taken up the call in a variety of ways, working theoretically and speculatively with various concepts of dreaming and making use of various forms of dreamlike data (journals, autobiographies, art works, and other symbolic material) from teacher education classrooms, programs, and experiences to imagine dreamwork as a fundamental dimension of teacher education and its capacity for transformation.

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Waking Up and Dreaming the Future

Reflections on the Art of James Baldwin and Carrie-Mae Weems and the Impossibility of Teacher Education

PAULA M. SALVIO

University of New Hampshire

PETER MAAS TAUBMAN

Brooklyn College, Emeritus

SINCE THE MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD on May 25th, we have witnessed a multi-racial, global movement demanding the end to systemic anti-Black racism and the dismantling of structures of white supremacy and white privilege. That movement, taking place in the midst of a pandemic and economic collapse, has sparked discussions among educators about how to respond to these demands. Presidents of universities, superintendents and chancellors of public school systems, and heads of teacher organizations have expressed outrage and grief over the killing of Mr. Floyd. They have vowed, as Cornell University's president, Martha Pollack (2000) put it, to "do all we can ... to address this scourge of racism and ... address it directly in our educational programs, in our research and in our engagement and related activities." How universities and K-12 schools will "address it" remains to be seen, particularly given current economic and medical constraints, how, in the past, promises have been made and then broken, and how white people seem, so often, to have awoken only to fall back asleep. As James Baldwin (1985a) wrote, "The white people of the country have become, for the most part, sleepwalkers, and their somnambulation is reflected in the caliber of U.S. politics and politicians" (p. 685).

In this essay, we focus on teacher education and argue that, if it is committed to addressing the issues and demands raised by the protests, it must recognize and come to terms with certain disavowals at the heart of its own, as well as the nation's, project of public education. Those disavowals are sustained by what James Baldwin (1984 as quoted in Kenan, 2010) termed "the dream of safety" (p. 137), a dream he defined variously in terms of white supremacy, American exceptionalism, racial innocence, and personal absolution. He also described the dream of safety as one in which people believe they can predict, categorize, and define, human emotions, desires and relationships, thus, limiting and perverting their complexity. Such a belief, as William Pinar and other curriculum scholars have argued, has, for far too long, shaped approaches to teacher

education (see in particular Pinar, 2009, 2012; Ravitch, 2020; Salvio & Boldt, 2009; Taubman, 2010; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2019).

Throughout this essay, we turn to the psychoanalytic concept of disavowal with the aim of augmenting and complicating that concept with Baldwin's call for us to admit the lies we tell ourselves and to awaken from our dreams of safety, a call that is also evident in the work of contemporary photographer and artist Carrie May Weems. Weems' (1995-1996) photo-(auto)biographies offer studies in the relationships between individual life stories and collective historical narratives, particularly those stories that have been relegated to the margins of history. Like Baldwin, Weems envisions the artist as a narrator of history who remembers, in the words of Hertha D. Sweet Wong (2018), "those whose lives have been lost through a colonial education" (p. 192). We bring together psychoanalysis, Baldwin's writings on racial innocence, and Weems' descriptions of her aesthetic process, with a focus on her 1995 installation, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*, at a moment when a pandemic also renders the education project suddenly unsecured and, thus, open. With this openness in mind, and in the company of Weems and Baldwin, we present narratives and images that stress the poetic function of language, making room for what is disavowed in teacher education, and opening up our discussions of teacher education's aspirational dream of justice. That dream is contingent upon recognizing teacher education's dreams of safety—dreams that defend against the knowledge that education generally and teacher education specifically, as these are currently conceived and implemented, are impossible.

An Impossible Profession

Following Freud, we understand the impossibility of education in terms of the disruptive nature of the unconscious. The teacher can never be certain of what the student will learn, and as Freud (1917/1955) points out in his discussion of psychoanalysis as a learning process, "the news that reaches your consciousness is incomplete and often not to be relied on" (pp. 142–143). But we also argue that making education impossible has been the way white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and economic disparities continue to shape and be shaped by the school curriculum, institutionalized knowledge, and school policies and practices. Finally, education appears impossible today in the most literal sense, given the presence of the Coronavirus. How will students return to schools, what will classes look like, and how will students, teachers, and families be protected? These pressing questions render education as we've known it impossible in the most concrete sense.

The Unconscious

Because the unconscious constitutes a radical otherness within knowledge, it subverts, as Shoshanna Felman (1982/1997) put it, "any possibility of totalizing what is known or of eradicating one's own ignorance" (p. 25). Its *unheimliche* proximity and intimate alterity, as well as eruptions, resist and disrupt the closure, transparency, and causal narratives that education pursues. Not only do the enigmatic workings of the unconscious create unexpected shifts and unanticipated feelings in the relationships between students and teachers, they also make a

shambles of efforts to predict and to control, two projects that have been imposed on teachers and that serve as priorities in the culture of accountability that dominates teacher education.

At some level, we know that students will not ultimately walk away with whatever we believe we are teaching or, even, what we actually teach. As psychoanalysis suggests, we always mean more than we say and say more than we mean, or as Shoshanna Felman (1982/1997) wrote, “The unconscious . . . is precisely the discovery that human discourse can by definition never be entirely in agreement with itself, entirely identical to its knowledge of itself” (p. 24). The unconscious de-centers us and threatens to disrupt our comprehension of ourselves and others. The unconscious also constitutes the difference between subjectivity and the individual. When historian and psychoanalyst Elizabeth Roudinescu (2001) argued that the “era of subjectivity has given way to the era of individuality” (p. 3), a neoliberal individuality, she was suggesting that the individual today is already a fiction created by neoliberal capitalism and, we would add, white supremacist practices, structures, and ideologies.

Following Badiou (1997/2008) who wrote that Lacan taught him that the “subject is a question,” Roudinescu (2001) suggested that the unconscious is structured in terms of both a question and a surplus. Who am I? What do/should I want? What do you, the Other, want from me? Around these questions, initially inarticulate pulsations, the unconscious coalesces, but the answers landed on never, finally, satisfy. There is always more, always, thankfully, a surplus. To be satisfied with the answer would be to fall into the fixity of the ego or identity or rigid scripts or conceptions of the sovereign individual. Such answers lock us into the prison of a misapprehension, because they discount the force of the unconscious. Subjectivity, understood as an unruly dream-like interplay between an unconscious and an ego, understood as fluid, transgressive, and restless, plays havoc with conventions, the right way to be, and the correct answer.

The unconscious, then, disrupts the certainty that what is learned is what is taught, that we teach what we think we are teaching, and that we can be accurately categorized and reduced to our identities or developmental stages, or rendered predictable. It also complicates the hope of teaching social justice and transforming society through democratic education.

The unaddressed reality of segregated schools, class divisions, and white supremacy implicitly and explicitly shapes the project of education in the U.S. The unacknowledged horrors and consequences of centuries of anti-Black racism and white supremacy, coupled with the hidden disparities in educational opportunities for rich and poor, have subverted educational projects and, in the best cases, reduced them to small victories in an endless and unwinnable war. The knowledge that the United States has been and in many respects remains a criminal state—one whose racial policies served as a model for Nazi Germany (see Whitman, 2017), one which has erected concentration camps on its borders, and one which Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015) alludes to as a “police state”—is disavowed by the country and white Americans. As James Baldwin (1979) challenged an audience at the University of Berkeley, “How can you expect a people who can’t educate their own children [about their past, the past of the nation, and today’s reality] to educate anyone else?” Can segregated schools do anything more than perpetuate a segregated society? What does teacher education mean when one disavows the history and reality of a criminal nation and the false narratives that enable it?

As of this writing, in the summer of 2020, universities and K-12 schools are struggling with how to open this fall, and how to prepare for an uncertain and troubling future. Distance learning, home schooling, open-air education, and hybrid curricula have taken on a new urgency, as have questions about how to address the needs of homeless students, food insecure students,

international students, and students without internet access, as well as questions about the financial sustainability of colleges and universities. While these questions are beyond the scope of this essay, we raise them for two reasons. First, we worry that they are being answered in ways that continue the same-old approaches to education as “delivery of the goods” and job preparation and perpetuate the disavowals and lies mentioned above. Second, it seems clear that the pandemic and recent protests have exposed some of those disavowals and lies and that the very uncertainty the virus brings offers us a space or opportunity to fundamentally rethink the project of education by facing the disavowals, lies, and dreams of safety to which we cling.

To explore these disavowals and these dreams, we turn briefly to Freud’s theorization of disavowal and then to Baldwin’s revelatory and prophetic reporting on the lies white Americans tell themselves. We then offer examples of how dreams of safety have misled educators, specifically teacher educators. Finally, we discuss how the work of Carrie Mae Weems offers one example of how art may wake us from these dreams and, paradoxically, make education possible in the light of its impossibility.

Disavowal

In everyday usage, disavowal is generally taken to denote the denial of or refusal to accept responsibility. Psychoanalytic theory, however, offers a more complicated conceptualization of disavowal. Unlike repression, where one forgets and forgets that one has forgotten, the psychoanalytic concept of disavowal suggests one knows or is aware of something but prefers to keep that knowledge out of view, on the periphery of consciousness, and to act as if one did not know it.

According to Freud (1940/1964), disavowals “occur very often” (p. 204), but they always serve as a defense against and response to a profound sense of terror—terror of loss of love, of power, of identity, of innocence. Such disavowals allow individuals to simultaneously maintain contradictory attitudes towards self and others, but they also keep them from forming a view that integrates these attitudes, and thus, they result in a sealing off of imagination, replacing it with fantasy, fetish, or fixations or repetition compulsions.

James Baldwin was no admirer of psychoanalysis, viewing it as a method of forced adjustment—“God no, never got adjusted,” he told an interviewer (as quoted in Standley & Pratt, 1989, p. 247)—but he, nevertheless, practiced a penetrating psycho-social analysis of all varieties of American disavowal: the lies we tell ourselves as individuals and as a nation. “Baldwin fully understood the power of the American lie,” wrote Eddie Glaude, Jr. (2020), “[That lie] transforms facts and events that do not quite fit our self-understanding into the details of American greatness or features of a never-ending journey to perfection” (pp. 27–28). As Baldwin told Studs Terkel in 1961 (as quoted in Standley & Pratt, 1989), “White Americans know the crimes committed against black people and they do not know the crimes, because they do not want to know” (p. 14). Or, as he described to an interviewer in 1962 (as quoted in Standley & Pratt, 1989), “The problem of the American identity has everything to do with all the things that happened in this country but never have been admitted or dealt with” (p. 26). Perhaps, more than any other American writer, James Baldwin explored what disavowal has looked like in America, its repercussions, the terrors behind it, and the dreams that sustain it.

In March of 1987, and shortly before he died, I, Peter, had the opportunity to interview James Baldwin. Among other questions, one I asked him concerned what he would tell an audience

of high school teachers and students, an audience to whom I would soon be presenting a paper about his work. He said, “Tell them: ‘There is no safety.’” This admonition continues to seem apposite, but also deeply pessimistic. Baldwin was no pessimist, though, so how then can we understand his contention or prophesy? What relevance does it have to how we think about teacher education today? Why would Baldwin want students and teachers to know that there is no safety?

In many of his essays and novels, Baldwin reflected on what he described as the dream of safety. At times, he equated that dream with white supremacy, the dream that whiteness will not only guarantee a privileged position on a racial hierarchy, but will also offer a defense against the vicissitudes of life. On one hand, his claim that whiteness is a *dream* of safety seems suspect. After all, being white does offer a great many privileges, including protection from being murdered by police or armed whites, being unjustly jailed, and being shattered by race-based inequities in, for example, access to decent and fair medical, financial, educational, and housing resources. On the other hand, whiteness, at least for poor and increasingly working and middle-class whites, can be dangerous. As Jonathan Metz (2020) and Arlie Hochschild (2016) argued, white people are championing racist, right wing policies that wind up destroying their health, livelihoods, security, and even lives because they see those policies as benefitting Blacks and other “undeserving” groups at the expense of white people. Or as Baldwin (1985a) wrote, “What is happening on the streets of Harlem to black boys and girls is also happening on all American streets to everybody” (p. 400).

Baldwin also equated the dream of safety with a belief in American exceptionalism, a belief that this country is divinely ordained, the fruit of a glorified, although mythic, history, and superior to all other nations. The dream is belied, Baldwin contended, by racism, poverty, and the savagery of white supremacy in the country. Baldwin also equated the dream of safety with the illusion that, somehow, we, ourselves, are absolved of responsibility, innocent of the blame we hurl at others, and not complicit in the world we condemn. “[T]he world ... is not simply a vindictive plot imposed on people,” he wrote, “it is also the world they have helped to make” (Baldwin, 1985a, p. 155). It’s a tough pill to swallow, our own complicity, and it is “something that we don’t want to face” (Baldwin, 1985a, p. 242). Or, as he said elsewhere,

The object of one’s hatred is never, alas, conveniently outside but is seated in one’s lap, stirring in one’s bowels and dictating the best of one’s head. And if one does not know this, one risks becoming an imitation—and, therefore, a continuation—of principles one imagines oneself to despise. (Baldwin, 1985a, p. 686)

Whether he was talking about the pull of passion that explodes our seemingly settled normalcy or about our flawed, idiosyncratic lives that disrupt our taken for granted identities and destabilize what we thought we knew, he insisted that we must look at what is painful in our own lives and the life of our nation and recognize how we are implicated in the problem. The price for saving the country, he would often say, “is to understand oneself” (as quoted in Kenan, 2010, p. 47).

The obstacles to such a fearless search are, for Baldwin, the dreams of safety to which we cling. While all these dreams of safety may offer the *illusion* of protection, they also may, as Baldwin (1985b) suggested, “reach culmination or climax ... in the nightmare orgasm of genocide” (p. 102). But to give up such dreams, to recognize our disavowals, risks not only the identities and selves we have built up, but our very place in the universe. This is a terrifying prospect. What then are the terrors, the disavowals, and the dreams of safety that haunt teacher education? And what would it mean for us to give up those dreams?

Efforts, Terrors, and Dreams of Safety in Teacher Education

In the past, when it came to challenging white supremacy and anti-Black racism, educators and school systems have not, as Baldwin (1985a) urged, gone “for broke” (p. 325). Instead, if any efforts have been made in K-12 schools and teacher education programs, they have been toward adding a bit more history about the African American experience, developing culturally relevant/sensitive teaching approaches and trauma-informed pedagogies, and/or instituting extra-curricular approaches focused on improving race relations. More recently, efforts have consisted of establishing charter schools in poor, predominantly Black and Latinx neighborhoods and holding teachers and teacher education programs accountable for poor test scores seen as an outcome of the so-called “soft bigotry of low expectations for minority students” (Bush, 2000, n.p.). Institutions of higher learning have focused on recruiting more faculty of color, often with little success and less success in keeping them, offering lukewarm or declining support for various minors or programs in the study of oppressed groups, and providing scholarships to students of color. Efforts apparent in teacher education programs often take the form of instituting standards of cultural competency, “dispositions,” against which are measured the skills and attitudes of student teachers. We argue that, other than what some label liberation studies, these efforts too often fail because those who make them disavow the impossibility of education and cling to dreams of safety. What do we mean?

These efforts disavow the unconscious and sustain a particular version of the individual, one very much entangled with neoliberal capitalism and white supremacy. They also disavow the criminality of the U.S. and how profoundly anti-Black racism structures all aspects of American life. Its disavowal is masked by dreams of safety: dreams of racial innocence, of white heroism, and of the ability to control, predict, and ensure educational outcomes. Such efforts sustain the belief that there exists a knowledge that can be taught and, thus, learned, a knowledge that already knows its own meaning in advance. This approach to education assumes a straightforward, transparent relationship between what is taught and what is learned. Should K-12 students, particularly white students, learn about, for example, the Tulsa massacre, the work of Ida B. Wells, the long history of police violence against Blacks, the Nazi admiration for U.S. eugenics and Jim Crow laws, and the failures of Reconstruction? Of course. Should they read works by Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Rita Dove, and Claudine Rankin? Of course. But how these texts and histories will be received, what students come away with, or how they may be taught, often by white teachers, is unknowable and unpredictable. Furthermore, if these texts and histories are taught as vehicles or carriers for particular messages known in advance, then such efforts fly in the face of what Baldwin (1985a), in his talk to teachers, demanded:

to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself (sic), to make his own decisions ... to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions. (p. 326)

Just as the psychoanalyst cannot “tell” the patient what the problem is, just as posting a list of dos and don’ts on the classroom wall doesn’t guarantee good behavior, so the teacher can never be certain of what the student will take from the message delivered.

Such efforts in teacher education to address racism most often focus on the individual and, as sociologist Stephen Steinberg (2007) argued, “elide the issue of power, reducing racism down to the level of attitudes” (p. 17). Historian Leah Gordon (2015) continued the critique of the race

relations model, one she labeled racial individualism. Informing racial individualism, which “suggests racial justice could be attained by changing white minds and protecting African American rights” are “psychological individualism, rights-based individualism, and belief in the socially transformative power of education” (Gordon, 2015, p. 2). Gordon’s (2015) and Steinberg’s (2007) critiques are of those who “educationalize” social problems or, in other words, view education as the way to eradicate racism by changing attitudes. According to Steinberg and Gordon, unless we change social conditions—i.e., unless we dismantle systemic racism and white power structures or unless we overthrow neoliberal capitalism or at the very least rein in its excesses—schools, as part of society, will simply reproduce social inequality and there’s little teacher education can do.

In focusing their critiques on efforts that privilege the neoliberal individual, one always progressing and self-monitoring and one that can be measured, these critics elide the subjectivity of students and teachers, conflating it with individuality. As accurate as they are, the critiques fail to open the way to a different kind of education, one we’ll address in a moment, one that does not know its meaning in advance, one that is impossibly possible.

We believe, following Baldwin (1985a), that “the reality, the depth, and the persistence of the delusion of white supremacy in this country causes any real concept of education to be as remote, and as much to be feared, as change or freedom itself” (p. 652). Indeed, given the unruly disruptiveness of the unconscious and the fact that so many of us are unwilling to accept that we are sleep walking, can education be other than impossible? And yet, we continue to fall into dreams of safety.

Those dreams defend against unbearable terrors: the terror that there is not and never has been a meritocracy in this country, the terror that whites have been the beneficiaries of affirmative action for centuries, that we whites may not deserve our successes, that our comfort, our position, and our security are built on others’ suffering, or as Maya Angelou (1987) put it to the white auditor, in her poem, “The Mask,” “But Sugar, it was our submission that made *your* world go round” (n.p.). There is the terror that the stories we’ve told ourselves about what we know and what we should teach may all be a poisonous tangle of lies. As Baldwin (1985a) wrote, “[White people] have brought humanity to the edge of oblivion: because they think they are white. Because they think they are white, they do not dare confront the ravage and the lie of history” (p. 137). White liberal teachers are not immune from his criticism. “This liberal sympathy—for I have never met a Northern school teacher who did not claim to be a liberal—is rarely equal to the dry-eyed task of teaching” (Baldwin, 1974, p. xiii). And, “because they think they are white, they believe ... in the dream of safety” (Baldwin, 1985a, p. 77). In his last interview, Baldwin sounded pessimistic.

The whole of American reality is based on the necessity of keeping Black people out of it ... non-existent. Except according to [white people’s] terms. ... Now their kids are deeply lost. ... They’re trapped. And nothing will spring the trap, nothing. (as quoted in Standley & Pratt, pp. 291–292)

Baldwin was, however, not a pessimist. He continued to believe that whites could wake up, that we could relinquish our dreams of safety, and that the world could be changed. “For to dare to hope to become,” he wrote, “is to surrender the dream of safety” (Baldwin, 1985b, p. 101). What will it mean for educators to give up the dream of safety? How might education, given its impossibility, be possible?

The Possibility of an Impossible Profession

While we believe in the importance of making the arts, autobiographical work, and liberation studies—all illuminated by complicated interdisciplinary conversations and organized around particular questions and life experience—central to the curriculum, in this last section, we focus specifically on the arts. Such a move, we believe, speaks to subjectivity rather than individuality. Such a move counters the dominant approach in teacher education that substitutes skills, best practices, and “what works” for the inter-subjective labor required to make what is taught one’s own (Pinar, 2009, pp. 38–39). Such a move offers opportunities for what Prague linguist, Roman Jakobson (1995), understood as the poetic function of language: a means through which to protect “against automation, and against rusting our formulations of love and hate, resistance and reconciliation, belief and denial” (p. 32). Such a move assumes, as James Baldwin wrote in “The Artist’s Struggle for Integrity,” that “the artist’s struggle . . . must be considered as a kind of metaphor for the struggle, which is universal and daily, of all human beings on the face of this globe to get to become human beings” (as quoted in Kenan, 2010, p. 41). Such a move analogizes the curriculum, itself, not only to art, but to the struggle. It suggests that unlike the fixed curriculum offered at all levels of schooling, one that dismally fails to convey “the unpredictability and the occasional and amazing splendor of the human being” (Baldwin as quoted in Kenan, 2010, p. 141), the curriculum we are advocating insists on finding its poetry in the lives of the people.

To explore what it would mean to conceptualize the curriculum as a medium and a “metaphor for the struggle,” we turn to the work of Carrie Mae Weems, an American artist best known for her photography, who works with a range of symbol systems including text, fabric, audio, digital images, and installation video. We offer Weems’ series not to assign specific or fixed meanings to it, but to suggest how an open work of art, one whose affective knowledge is not known in advance, exemplifies a teacher education curriculum that rouses us from our dreams of safety. Like Baldwin, Weems turns to art to generate complicated dialogues with the long history of racist representations of black people that eclipse, if not entirely erase, their humanity.

Just as psychoanalysis is a process that provides access to knowledge denied to consciousness, Weems’ work proceeds through breakthroughs, leaps, regressions, and deferred action rather than through a conventional linear sequential pathway from ignorance to assumed mastery, mastery wielded, in Lacan’s (1988) words, “as an instrument of power” (p. 91). Weems offers us a means to work through social and personal histories and to dream through a repertoire of poetic strategies. She offers a political art that, as Holland Cotter (2001) wrote, “is about asking questions and not delivering answers” (p. E 85). Such a curriculum, must, we urge, be embedded in students’ experiences, much as Weems’ work is embedded in her experiences.

The central questions driving Weems’ work, much as they do Baldwin’s, concern identity: Who am I? What do I want and what do others want from me? How have I become who I am? How and where do I enter? How am I complicit in my own pain? In relations of power? How can I, we wake up? These are questions around which the unconscious coheres, restless questions that do not find rest in final answers. As Weems has said, “What happens to me, happens to you, me, and us together” (as quoted in Willis, 2012, p. 998). Thus, in exploring our own histories, we must explore the histories that made us, or as Weems (2009) put it, we must “locate the root of self in history, and so must open up history” (n.p.). This strategy resonates with the ways in which *currere* engages students and teachers in a form of study that, as William Pinar (2012) explained, explores “the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction” (p. 35).

In her work, Weems addresses many of the questions above by merging history, political theory, philosophy, literature, folklore, anthropology, film criticism, with her art to create worlds out of the very mundane rituals of daily life. She often includes herself in her photographic images with the aim of becoming both the subject and photographer, performer and director, blurring distinctions between participant and observer (Weems, 2009). Her work is meant to disrupt the viewer's taken for granted perspectives. As she put it, she wants the viewer to know "they are looking at artifice, that nothing is natural" (Weems, 2009, n.p.). Like Baldwin, Weems (2014) admitted to and struggles with her own flaws: often saying in interviews, "I'm often lost and don't know what I'm doing" (n.p.). She offers us new ways to dream through a repertoire of poetic strategies, that resonate with Jakobson's (1995) theory of the poetic function of language.

The poetic function of language, as understood by Jakobson (1995), is partially constituted in the disruption of normative modes of communication and univocal meanings. The poetic function of language is a means through which to defamiliarize the familiar or to provoke what Freud (1917/1955) understood as the uncanny, a form of alienation that dismantles repressions and disavowals. Weems, like Baldwin, directs her art and politics at the long histories of extreme, traumatic experiences of anti-Black racism. And, like Baldwin's writing, her work pushes her subjects to challenge the conventions that regulate the symbolic order. The force of Jakobson's theory of the poetic function of language pierces through "the symbolic order and constraints of rationality," in part by building on the idea that the term that is present invokes absent terms. Jakobson's (1995) theory recalls Freud's description of the "dream work" where two images might be overlaid as, for example, when the faces appearing in one's dream are both one's mother's and one's teacher's faces (condensation) or where feelings are aroused that have no clear connection to those images (displacement).

In what follows, we discuss Weems' (1995) installation, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*, to offer an example of curriculum that suggests how the poetic function of language can work to wake us from our dreams of safety and from our disavowal of the impossibility of education. While the specific exhibit does not include all the qualities Weems is noted for, the series does demonstrate how education might speak to subjectivities, to the unconscious of the nation, and to disavowed histories. Weems' work offers one approach to facing what Stephen Butterfield (1974) in his discussion of African American autobiographies, referred to as the "knowledge of the sins of the fathers," a knowledge that "is a terrible burden for the children of pirates, murderers, kidnappers, rapists, for the children of those who received the benefits of stolen labor and genocide and closed their eyes, perhaps with a humanitarian shudder, to its effects" (p. 232). And it accomplishes this not by telling the viewer what to think, but by stirring us to consider how our lives are entangled in what we see and by layering images that are both ineffable and powerful and raise more questions than they answer.

Weems' (1995) pictorial essay, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*, consists of a series of photographs taken of slaves and former slaves living in the American South in the 19th and 20th centuries. Weems found these images in museum and university archives. She used them, she explains, "to give voice to a subject that historically has had no voice" (Weems, 2000, n.p.). Among the photographs she collected were daguerreotypes that were commissioned in 1850 by the Harvard scientist Louis Agassiz. Agassiz traveled throughout the South with a photographer who took portraits of slaves so that Agassiz could use them as visual evidence to support his theory of the racial inferiority of Africans and to render a taxonomy of physical types in the slave population. "When we're looking at these images," Weems (2000) explained, "we're looking at the ways in which ... white America saw itself in relationship to the Black subject" (n.p.), and we

are coming face to face with photography's complicity in racism and the ways in which one image evokes other images. In the series, Weems interrogates the history of Black subjects in photography and the history of anthropology's racial violence against the Black subject. The majority of the photographs are black and white. Many of the subjects are depicted naked or half naked and presented as anthropological specimens. Weems stained the original photographs with a monochrome red and placed a circle around the face of the subjects. Etched into the glass placed over the photographs is text written by Weems, which she used, as she explained in an interview at MOMA, to create a distance between the image and the viewer or remind the viewer that while these photographs were taken from another time, used for other purposes, they speak to us now and force us to question the connections between past and present, who we/they were and who we/they are now (Weems, 2000).

In the text, Weems used repetitive patterns—the simple refrain of “you became, you became, you became” as in “You became a scientific profile,” “You became an anthropological debate,” “You became a Negroid type,” “You became a photographic subject”—as agitation, as improvisation, and as movement within a history of racial violence, loss, rape, and dehumanization. In her discussions of *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*, Weems (2000) tells us that she intentionally listened for repetition in order to build complex narratives from singular events. The repetition mirrors that of a blues motif or the call and response of collective agency. It also challenges us to ask who we've become now and how we came to be who we are.

Weems seems to use the presentation of the photographs and the poetic function of language to shift the colonizing gaze. During her interview with Weems, bell hooks (1995) underscored that “it is not only white people who look at the black image with the colonizing gaze. We have all been taught to look at black images with a colonizing eye” (p. 77). Her comments echo Weems' claim (as quoted in Willis, 2012) that “What happens to me, happens to you, me and us together” (p. 998). It's a claim not unfamiliar to James Baldwin.

Conclusion

The poetics of both Weems and Baldwin exemplify the kind of work teacher education could offer: a repertoire of ethical and aesthetic strategies for exploring and perhaps working through the disavowals stitched into the history of the United States. Such work offers teacher educators not the detailed directions, specified purpose, and purportedly predictable products that now constitute teacher education, but rather ways to engage with and think through and beyond the ways the American Dream has always, in Baldwin's words (as quoted in Buccola, 2019), “been achieved at the expense of the American Negro” (p. 379). If public education and teacher education truly commit to reshaping the American nightmare into a dream worth striving for, they must accept their own impossibility. We must provide students with opportunities to explore, express, and struggle with questions that remain fundamentally unanswerable but that provoke further study. We must cull content, that is questions and directions, from the study of the rich legacies of Black artists, philosophers, Black diaspora women, and the long tradition of the Black liberation struggles that have always been committed to decolonizing our minds and imaginations.

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The Dreamwork of Childhood Memory

The Futures Teachers Make from the Schooling Past

DEBBIE SONU

City University of New York

LISA FARLEY

York University

SANDRA CHANG-KREDL

Concordia University

JULIE C. GARLEN

Carleton University

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES BRING TO THE PEDAGOGICAL PRESENT traces of the past (Britzman, 2003) yet also telegraph dreams about how structures of schooling and society might be imagined otherwise. In teacher education, memories are often used in support of critical reflection. They provide the raw material for prospective teachers to contemplate both desirable and undesirable aspects of the teacher's role and to make observations about issues relating to classroom authority, values, and expectations (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Mitchell & Weber, 1998, 1999; Mitchell et al., 2011). As teachers stretch into their identities, traces of the past become "ghosts" that haunt conceptualizations about the work, intentions, and practices of teaching (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003, p. 3). While linked to past events, memories, like dreams, are also linked to speculative imaginations about the future (Horton & Malinowski, 2015). Both memories and dreams hover in an elusive forcefield made from material reality and imagined immateriality (Derrida & Mehlman, 1972). Remembering may well be *dreamwork* when it tumbles the one-remembering into the intermingled space between lived social reality and future possibilities that are not-yet.

In this article, we offer *dreamwork* as a metaphor and method to shine light on the creative ways that prospective teachers utilize childhood memory to both affect the enduring, disquieting, and at times painful bedrock of the schooling past and imagine the pedagogical future. Our data is drawn from 116 childhood memories written by adults who were enrolled in teacher education programs and/or childhood studies courses in Canada and the United States. The memories we gathered are diverse, ranging from carefree scenes of summer picnics, first bike rides, and "innocent mischief" to frightening times when everyday mistakes, risks, and antics lead to harsh punishment and surveillance (Farley et al., 2020, p. 111). Of all the memories, we focus here on 40 memories set in the context of schools and classrooms to speculate about the lasting impact of

childhood past as teachers engage, navigate, and understand their adult return to the classroom (Britzman, 2003). By underscoring the transformative qualities of memory in relation to processes of empathy, repetition, and refusal, we theorize dreamwork as essential to orienting teachers toward different and possible pedagogical futures.

Dreams, Memories, Possibilities

At the turn of the 19th century, Sigmund Freud (1900) published *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which he conceived dreaming as a nighttime avenue into a world of unconscious wishes and forgotten events. Dreams would continue to haunt the analyst's lifetime of work, particularly in relation to memory. If in Freud's later writings, he argues that "dreams produce memories that the dreamer has forgotten" (1940/2006, p. 21), in his earlier musings, he suggests that "memories" represent "the manifest content of dream-thoughts" (Freud, 1914/2006, p. 393). For Freud, dreams conjure memories as much as memories have dream-like qualities. It is not that memories and dreams are equivalent, but that both are "affecting narratives" that pass through layers of fantasy, wish, and anxiety that mediate, screen, shape, distort, and even conceal the meaning of the events to which they refer (Britzman, 2016, p. 140). Since both dreams and memories change the actual material of the events they represent, neither are exact chronicles. They reside in a collision of temporality: a time when the past and the anticipation of the future co-mingle, often without condition (Silin, 2018). In a related sense, dreams and memories break down the modern binary between child and adult because they invite a momentary leave of chronological time and draw together earlier and later moments of life.

Both dreams and memory dislodge time and space from the certitude and transparency often glorified in Western discourses. Memories, like dreams, are fragmented, disorienting, and affective. For surrealist poets and artists, dreams not only loosen the sense of a unified and individual self, but also serve as a revolutionary response to systems of domination that equate rationality with existence. Louis Aragon's (1924/2003) essay, "A Wave of Dreams," reminds us "that there are other experiences that the mind can embrace which are equally fundamental such as chance, illusion, the fantastic, dreams" (para. 4). Here, the dream is a process where representational forms become subordinate to "the textual weaving of differences" (Greenwalt, 2010), sitting within the inextricable and often unnoticed space between what is spoken and what lingers in silences. "The dreamer," write Jacques Derrida and Jeffrey Mehlman (1972), "invents his [sic] own grammar" (p. 89), actively contesting a fixed reality and unhinging ideological certitude to make room for more expansive interpretations than have hitherto been imagined.

In the essay "Real Dreams," Elissa Marder (2013) draws from a range of philosophical readings of Freud's work to argue that the radical singularity of dreams gives new meaning to older and extant forms of knowledge by producing insights that open us to a horizon of future possibilities. It is not just that we interpret dreams at a later time; they impact and therefore make the future itself. Whether intentional or not, dreams leave traces that are already "a principle of futurity" that change what might occur (Marder, 2013, p. 213). As Marder (2013) explains, "dreams are not merely interpreted *in* the future; they make something happen *to* the future" (p. 213, original emphasis). Édouard Glissant's (1985/2019) poem "Dream Country, Real Country" brings reality and dream into a similar transformative relation by carrying the traumatic history of colonialism into an original future, undetermined by the past and on the cusp of liberation. From

all that is lost of the original “dream country,” Glissant seeks repair not through the recovery of what was, but from a poetic synthesis of the new, what he refers to in his poem as the wounded real.

According to Robin D. G. Kelley (2002), the radical imagination created throughout the history of Black scholarship embraces the dream as a poetics of surrealism by crafting new forms and levels of consciousness from the plight of the formally colonized. Chronicling how “revolutionary dreams erupt out of political engagement” (Kelley, 2002, p. 8)—for instance, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s celebrated “I Have A Dream,” or in the context of education, Gloria Ladson-Billing’s (1994) *The Dreamkeepers*—Kelley (2002) argues that dreams must not be underestimated as individual desire, but as collective labour, one that, as we write this article, has spilled onto the streets as a global outcry against state-sanctioned police violence and systemic anti-Black racism.¹ Cast in this way, dreams symbolize a shared demand and desire for difference. They anticipate, without knowing for certain, a reckoning with legacies of social injustice that allows for a rising-up from subjugated life as an affirmative new future (Harney & Moten, 2013).²

Yet, dreams are also anchored in social and institutional discourses that are anything but liberating. Neoliberal school reforms condition a culture of consumerism and individualism that orients dreamers to notions of “success” and “happiness,” detracting from the critical work needed to challenge social inequities and disproportionate access to these very ideals. The idealization of “the Dream,” as described by Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015), is nestled in “cul-de-sacs” of race privilege that uphold the meritocratic language of “American ambition” and cover the tracks of socially-produced inequities (p. 116). Rooted in national fantasies of cohesion and efficiency, the dream of education is actually a “broken dream” that secures unequal power relations and, in this way, “glide[s] over the domain of ethics” (McLaren, 1988, pp. 61–62). In this construction, education’s dream serves its own wishes to maintain the dominant social order (Taubman, 2017). Deborah Britzman (1998), too, exposes the limits of “education’s dream of mastery” (p. 10) as a myth of meritocracy linked to a long history that defines, “competency as the absence of conflict” and the teacher as a monolith of knowledge (Britzman, 2003, p. 7).

While dreams imprint dominant ideals of education, a kernel of transformation remains. Dreams register an “underside,” harboring dynamics of resistance that interrupt the “heroic story of progress” on which schooling is based (Britzman, 1998, p. 50). As Britzman (1998) writes, dreams script an internal “otherness” of the self, of schooling, and of society that disrupts any sense of coherence or completeness in those domains (p. 50). Dreams telegraph the most unexpected and unwanted aspects of our wishes, including the wish to *not* know and so charge us to account for our implication in this cavern of refusal. In a related sense, dreams represent the deeply “emotional situation” of education that does not proceed by reason alone (Britzman, 2009, p. ix). Neither teachers nor students are in charge of knowledge per se, just as curriculum and pedagogy do not settle, but rather produce, conflict. Indeed, from the vantage of the dream, education sets into motion surprising entanglements that fundamentally alter and undo one’s sense of being in the world.

Brought to bear on the present study, *dreamwork* can show how teachers use memory to resignify what has already occurred when envisioning a pedagogical future. With Adam Phillips (1995), we consider what it means to “include dreaming in a context other than sleeping,” namely, as a frame to study the relationship between the schooling past and pedagogical future (p. 68). Britzman (2016), too, takes up precisely this idea when she proposes the value of reading a broad range of representations, including play and art, “just like dreams” (p. 45; see also Farley, 2011). Reading memories “like dreams” allows us to speculate about the “transformation of thinking”

that new teachers engage to reimagine the schooling past (Britzman, 2016, p. 45). Read as dreams, memories tell us something about how teachers symbolize the “otherness” of the profession they are about to enter and how, through this process, they may affect and interrupt its often constrictive legacies (Britzman, 1998, p. 50).

“Strange Methods”

At four university sites in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, and New York City, we asked undergraduate students enrolled in teacher education programs and/or childhood studies courses to conjure a childhood memory that was significant to their adult lives. Through a two-part free writing exercise, participants were asked to describe a childhood memory by giving representation to the sights, sounds, scents, and feelings associated with the memory recalled and then to reflect on the relationship between their memory and their current aspirations devoted to the education of young people. While we left the question open to a range of childhood events and experiences, a good number (42 of 116) nonetheless set their memories within schools and classrooms, in relationship with teachers, and with fellow classmates. Because in this paper we are interested in how new *teachers* engage memory to affect the past and future, we focus our analysis on the 40 memories penned by participants enrolled in teacher education programs.³

We look to dreams themselves to situate our method of reading memory. In Britzman’s (1998) framing, dreams operate by “*strange methods*” that work over material events through processes such as “condensation, substitution, distortion, displacement, [and] reversal into [the] opposite” (p. 50, emphasis added). In foregrounding *dreamwork*, we are interested in how teachers make sense of and describe the methods, meanings, dynamics, and operations of their school memories. Here, we are guided by Jonathan Lear (2005) who notes that Freud “is primarily concerned not with the interpretation of dreams, but with the self-interpretation of dreamers” (p. 93). For us, reading memories as dreams is not, therefore, a matter of applying a theory of universal symbolism, such that a playground represents *x* or a punishing teacher means *y*. Instead, we emphasize the highly contextual and personal uses of *dreamwork* (Derrida & Mehlman, 1972) by focusing on the interpretations made by participants themselves. Our discussion therefore considers how new teachers use memory to represent both salient and quotidian events of the schooling past and to make meaning from that which is often beyond their grasp or control.

Our method of reading attends to meanings within the liminal dreamscape between memory and the production of futurity that the memory enables. Within this temporal overlap of past and future, we propose three processes of *dreamwork*: In the first, teachers bend the emotional force of memory into empathy with the imagined feelings of students they have yet to teach. In the second, prospective teachers aim to replicate pedagogical practices of revered teachers that involve moments of happiness, recognition, and success. In the third, teachers identify, challenge, and refuse to repeat the oppressive force of the school as they contemplate the deeply relational and critical aspects of the work. While some of these findings mirror studies where anticipated relationships with students are imagined as replications or reversals of teachers’ childhood memories (Chang-Kredl & Kingsley, 2014; Mitchell & Weber, 1999), our use of *dreamwork* allows us to home in on the specific processes through which teachers resignify the meaning of the schooling past in the imagination of the future. Across all three processes, we note how, in the first two, participants take the side of the child (i.e., empathy) or the teacher (i.e., repetition) to establish a continuity of feelings and efforts between past and future. In the third process, we

suggest that teachers take the side of otherness to imagine a wider set of pedagogical conditions in a structural and relational sense. None of these processes exist in a pure way. We offer them as psychical positions on the understanding that two or more may be at work, to a greater or lesser extent, inside any one person or memory.

Empathy: Fantasizing the Side of the Child

Of the 40 school memories that concern our paper, 12 draw from empathy to bridge the divide between the schooling past and pedagogical future. These memories document how the oftentimes raw emotions felt as children can endure as conditions for relating to and identifying with the children teachers have yet to teach. This dream-like transformation occurs through both the crafting of the memory, by which new teachers return to themselves as children, and the way participants draw a portrait of other children through their dreams of being a teacher. With hopes to create a more caring pedagogical future, teachers in this subset transformed their schooling past into pedagogical visions that presumed sameness between self and other, invoking empathy as a means to rescue children from their own past struggles with anxiety and hurt. The *dreamwork* of empathy, then, bridges this shift in positionality from past-child to future-teacher to imagined-student, with structures and school systems left largely unmentioned.

For example, four of the participants who utilized empathy recalled the sheer anxiety of entering a new school for the first time, in one case articulated as a state of “being really confused and scared,” and in another, feeling “intimidated with all these eyes staring.” For these new teachers, going to school opened an abyss rife with “fears of entering an unknown,” invoking empathy for the vulnerabilities that all children may feel. When asked why their memories matter to their future work with children, participants used their own feelings as reference points. Sonia, for example, recalled the fear of going to school for the first time, and in particular, “not want[ing] to leave the comfort of my mom.” She used this memory as a guide to contemplate “the fears that individuals, like myself, may experience.” Insofar as Sonia’s memory “helps me think about the struggles of the children that I teach,” it stands as a reminder that others, too, bring emotional experiences that may not be immediately apparent. As she wrote, her memory “makes me realize that everybody has a story and experience that shapes who they are.” Manny also uses her “nervous” experience of going to the Principal’s office as a touchstone from which to articulate her desire to “build a learning environment that is a brave space for EVERYONE” (original emphasis). In these cases, teachers remember the nervous child they once were and anticipate the anxieties of the students they imagine in their future classrooms.

While the memories above were contoured by the everyday-ness of feeling “nervous, vulnerable, and scared” in relation to school transitions and routines, five memories described feelings of humiliation and betrayal linked to the harsh actions of teachers. Alice described a memory about a teacher leading a math game:

If you responded incorrectly, she would say something that would make you feel so embarrassed. She would also start counting “1, 2, 3, ...” if it took you long to respond. Sometimes even the other students would start counting with her which made you feel nervous in responding wrong or not be able to think [sic] because everyone is already counting how long you’re taking until they say times up.

Alice's memory guides her belief that "not all children are confident" and that teachers who are keen on "pointing out and expecting a right answer affects [children] in the long run just like it did to me." The pressurized clock in this experience made Alice "hot/embarrassed to the point of being scared" and informs her dual commitment to never make a child feel rushed to answer correctly and never to make a child feel ashamed by calling attention to mistakes.

Alongside this game-gone-wrong, participants recalled scenes involving impatient, accosting, and unempathetic teachers. Ashley remembered her teacher yelling at her for not being able to "sit up straight" because she felt "extremely sick, tired and hungry." Eventually, she was sent "into the hallway for failure to comply," but in actual fact she felt unwell and eventually threw up. Meanwhile, Melissa was met with a "cross" and "impatient" teacher because she was unable to "lace up shoes" quickly enough. Lou remembered "feeling like an outcast" when "forced to work" with a classmate who required extra help. In all three cases, participants contend that their memories help them empathize with the ways young children can become anxious about falling behind, being misunderstood, "picked on," or "targeted." Such lessons were concluded with not only the perceived ability to know how it "feels to be treated by an adult who I thought I trusted," but also a desire to become teachers who are "more empathetic and cautious of how my students will feel when I act/make certain decisions in my classroom."

Whether participants use empathy to imagine universal conditions for all children, or whether they frame empathy as a quality they intend to embody, they all held the common belief that the children of their future classrooms will eventually mirror the struggles felt in their own childhoods. In this way, prospective teachers anticipate the nightmarish traces of anxiety, fear, and loneliness in their imagined students. With less empathy given to the decisions made by their own teachers—although one did mention the possibility of "good intentions"—none of the participants in this subset considered the institutional structure of the school, nor did they contemplate how social identity may affect a teacher's capacity to "know" their students. In these memories, empathy bridges differences in social positionality and presumes an exchange of roles relatively uncomplicated by relations of power that, in actual fact, situate teachers and students in unequal relations with each other and the school (Boler, 1999; Todd, 2003).

Repetition: Taking the Side of the Teacher

Of the 40 school-based memories, 10 aimed to repeat the practices and/or attitudes of a supportive, empathetic, caring, or loving teacher. Participants here used memory to envision pedagogical approaches they wish to replicate in their own classrooms, citing signifiers such as "empowerment," "creativity," "freedom," and "potential." Nicole's memory, for one, recalled an English teacher who "took the time" to teach her how to make flower pens as part of a fundraiser. She focused both on the beauty of the activity itself and on her teacher's "warmth and kindness" that "will never be forgotten." Indeed, Nicole's teacher becomes the embodiment of "qualities I would want to have as a teacher" and orients her valuation of "attachment and relationship" in the classroom. Alexandra, too, recalled a class activity of creating a Mother's Day card. Emphasizing the importance of "values" and "love" in living a good life, Alexandra, like her teacher, hopes to one day "allow children to self-reflect about the role models in their lives and to show it through creativity."

This desire to repeat positive pedagogies also references the welcoming of parents and cultures into school. For instance, Kristy recalled the great pride she felt during her first grade year

upon seeing her dad introduce his recipe for Chinese fried rice at a multicultural food festival. The “sudden, bigger appreciation for [her] Chinese culture” leads to her conclusion that “it is important for children, even adults, to learn to embrace their cultural background; it is who they are and what defines them.” Bora’s “most significant memory from childhood” warmly recalled having a “birthday party in school,” underlining the excitement of having her father bring “goodies and a cake” for all her classmates to share. Struck by the “mood of the classroom,” she recalled this memory as one that she “held truly to [her] heart,” a time when she was “happy, elated, and excited.” As if no time had passed, Bora even recalled that distinctive smell of burnt wax as she blew out her five candles. In visualizing this dream-like scene, she speculated about its implication for practice: “The fact that a birthday party made me happy proves that when I teach, there will be birthday parties for my students too, so that they can experience one in their classroom.”

Other examples of repetition are tied to activities that support children’s independence and ambition. Kelsey, who was home-schooled, recalled a memory that underlines the importance of play when teaching. Pretending to be a mother penguin in the snow framed her desire to help students experience the same sense of “freedom” that she did. Other projects included Jane’s red paper maché model of the planet Mars and Robin’s construction of a tadpole-like structure as part of a unit on the life cycle of a frog. Such projects, Jane described, instill “a deeper yearn to learn more,” which “pushes students to be better prepared for life.” More than glimpses of the past, these memories are made certain as a useful guide for the planning of future school curriculum. On this point, Jane shared: “This memory is one of the reasons why I enjoy assigning group work in school and take-home projects. I learned a lot on my own and I was able to incorporate other subjects as well like art.”

In each of these cases, participants constructed teachers as heroic individuals who are largely responsible for positive learning experiences. While inspiring role models can and do make a difference in children’s lives, the proclivity to idealize teachers leaves unexamined the ways pedagogy is bracketed and limited by the structures, contexts, and relations in which teachers actually work. Not unlike the position of empathy, the *dreamwork* of repetition may overlook the institutional pressures that make the teacher’s work more than an individual effort. In dreaming of a pedagogical future that has already occurred, these new teachers may also downplay their own newness—their own otherness—needed to identify and productively reimagine the institutional discourses of the school.

Refusal: Awakening the Side of Otherness

While the *dreamwork* of empathy and repetition may variably lead prospective teachers to identify with their future students through their own childhood selves or offer the pragmatic hope of replicating positive experiences in their own classroom designs, in the third subset of memories, 18 of the 40 new teachers worked through difficult school experiences by refusing to repeat the oppressive terms that made them possible at all. The assumption here is that the future can be different but only if the structuring conditions giving rise to experiences of social isolation, racism, and exclusion are dismantled and dreamt otherwise. In refusing the painful bedrock of the schooling past, these participants transformed anxiety into dreams rooted in care, critique, and social change, including the complexities that accompany these ideas.

For instance, Ava described her childhood memory as the time she became critically aware of the privileges of her wealthy peers and how, from the margins, she “would just watch them and

feel a little out of place.” C.O. recalled the painful teasing she endured for being “poor” and “not white.” She described an incident that led her to run from this “racist school” altogether:

I was about 12 years old. I was in class and some of my classmates (boys) started giving names at me and laughing at me. They said, “you are my housekeeper,” “you are stupid, you are poor, you are my maid.” I started crying and left the class. I remember running and then sitting on a bench out of the classroom.

Steeped in racialized, classed, gendered, and ableist remarks, this memory contributed to C.O.’s observation that racism “leaves trauma” in its wake and that it must be addressed as a systemic problem rather than an individual experience of “bullying.” Ava, too, challenged the idea that being “left out” is something that individual children can or should resolve on their own by becoming more resilient. “Not everyone comes out with a positive attitude after facing alienation,” wrote Ava, “and I think it matters to build self-esteem.”

Such jarring memories of childhood injury abound in this collection of 18 refusers. From being told to speak English, to the regulation of behavior, to instances of racism, these childhood memories demonstrate a range of ways children are subject to social hatred, often at the hands of other children. Anjie described a formative kindergarten memory about a time when socializing across racial lines proved to be one she would endure throughout her life:

This day I went to sit down next to this white girl and [she] yelled “you can’t sit here!” and I asked, “why not?” Then she said “because you’re BLACK!” I froze and then got teary eyed. This was the first time anyone had ever mentioned my skin colour and told me something was wrong with it. (original emphasis)

While years later Anjie ended up befriending the very same girl from her kindergarten class, she was surprised that this girl had no recollection of the event at all. “It made me realize how racism affects the victim much more than the reprimanded perpetrator,” she pointed out. Instead of deriving an imagined sense of empathy with the students of her future classroom, Anjie explained how this memory compels her to “consider her positionality,” a perceptible obligation since she “must strive to be a positive aspect to [her students’] educational journey.” Her example helps us to acknowledge that adult authority is needed to address racism enacted among and by children and in this way to no longer guard the exclusive construct of innocence mobilized to protect white children (Garlen et al., 2020). At the same time, Anjie’s memory gives us pause to question how the heavy-lifting of meaningful anti-racist education is often relegated to racialized teachers.

Memories leading to refusal also include anxious classroom scenes in which teacher judgments are made public and in view of other classmates. Chand remembered getting “sick for a long time” in grade 2. Upon returning to school, he also recalled being made to “sit at the back,” a tearful experience that he transformed into a pedagogical meditation on the uncertainty of life. “In reality,” he wrote, “change is happening to us and somethings [sic] it’s unpredictable.” The anxiety recalled is existential. About a second grade homework assignment that asked children to decide “what do you want to be when you grow up,” Alison recalled a state of anxiety over this proposition that she considered “too inappropriate and uncomfortable” for some children. “This is a very important memory for me. It was the first time remembering the anxious feeling,” she explained. “I want children to know that whoever they are I will support them.” The reignition of these anxious experiences led teachers to consider what it can mean to support kids while not

presuming to rescue them. Alison made precisely this point in her resolve that she “wants children to know that they don’t need to choose right away.”

In addition to experiences of exclusion and anxiety, four memories of this third subset featured children’s bouts with illness or getting sick—palpably described by Emannuelle as a disorienting “blur/buzz.” Whether missing the first two weeks of kindergarten because of a diagnosis of *Kawasaki Disease* or being shuttled back and forth from school to hospital for two full months of second grade, these memories resurrect feelings of distress, helplessness, and confusion. Memories of illness become the raw material for aspiring teachers to critique the pathologizing force of labels and the ethical limits of empathy. Referencing hazy images of needles, tubes, and machines, Katarina remembered most how her “parents were frightened though, the risk that their baby girl might not make it” and the lasting feeling that “I wasn’t normal.” From this memory, Katarina committed to loosen the hold of labels: “The labels we get stick & often they are quite hurtful. I want to do my best to eliminate that.” N.C., too, challenged the limits of labels in recalling how their diagnosis of epilepsy led peers “to laugh at me.” From this memory, N.C. offered an important critique of ableist assumptions of who does and “does not belong” at school. Avery recalled the “social neglect” of both teachers and peers on a day when she felt “too sick to move,” an experience that she further linked to race: “No one wanted a brown girl as a friend.” Looking back, Avery offered a critical perspective of the “assumptions” teachers can make about children when they “automatically connect to their own personal experiences.” Not unlike our critique of empathy above, Avery warned that such assumptions can be projections of the teacher’s own experiences that “distract what the issue is for the child.” It is this self-referential stance that Avery refuses to repeat.

Memories leading to dreams of refusal give representation to the specific contexts and circumstances shaping educational relationships and the elusive qualities of emotional life. They symbolize the structural inequities that position children differently in relationship to each other, the teacher, and the school, as well as constructs of innocence, protection, and knowledge. Their visions of self-as-future-educator draw together childhood experience with social critique and do so in ways that express dreams for how to materialize more equitable and just forms of teaching. When teachers draw from their own marginalization, they use this knowledge to question the ways in which education privileges those who fit inside seemingly universal assumptions of both childhood and learning. In this subset of memories, participants take the stance of future teachers who refuse to repeat oppressive conditions of education that disavow the emotional, relational, and structural aspects of teaching and learning. Their memories dream of a different future when teachers and young people can reconfigure social inequities and engage relational complexities as part and parcel of education, and not the opposite.

Pedagogical Dreaming

The use of memory in teacher education and curriculum studies has a long history that has radically shifted both fields. Against technocratic constructions of the teacher’s work, studies that delve into the depths of teacher memory call our attention to the complexities and conflicts produced at the intersection between the teacher’s biography and the institution of school (Britzman, 2003; Britzman & Pitt, 1996; Greene, 1973; Grumet, 1988; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Michell & Weber, 1998, 1999). With scholars before us, we maintain that teaching is a deeply human profession that confronts us with existential dilemmas, fuzzy boundaries between self and

other, and the trouble of embodying a sense of self within existing structures. Our study affirms these claims insofar as the new teachers participating here recalled school scenes that are electrified by dynamics of love and loss, idealization and anxiety, social exclusion and critique as formative to their imagination of a pedagogical future. Memory reminds us that teaching is not a series of tasks to master in the management of children, but an entanglement with “the leftover terrors and pleasures of having to begin” *and* with the social legacies that unevenly affect how and for whom beginnings are supported and made livable (Britzman, 2013, p. 104).

Our own efforts in this article add an understudied relationship between memory and dreams. In particular, we utilize the notion of *dreamwork* to show how teachers employ “strange methods” that work over, and ultimately transform, the material events of the schooling past (Britzman, 1998). As much as dreams show us that we are susceptible to the haunting return of history, their “defamiliarizing sway” also shows us that teachers are open to possibilities that are not-yet and what might still be (McLaren, 1991, p. 28). Through processes of empathy, repetition, and refusal, teachers show us how linking *dreamwork* with memory work can make something new from what has already occurred. This action is rooted, by virtue of our birth, in what Hannah Arendt (1958) calls “natality” (p. 9), which refers to our capacity to invite and protect what is totally unexpected in the face of what already exists. *Dreamwork*, then, refers not to a literal undoing of the past, but the symbolic work of representing how and why history matters—and can be made anew—in the imagination of a pedagogical present and future.

If, at times, teachers use memory to secure wishes to repeat happy experiences and rescue children from perceived trouble, they also symbolize a future of teaching that, while it cannot be known, could be different. Particularly in the *dreamwork* of refusal, teachers use memory to make insights into the often constricting features and exclusive conditions of the schooling past. Ourselves wary of categorizations of knowledge, we do not wish to suggest that teachers can be squeezed into any one of the frames in our analysis, e.g., either empathizers or repeaters or refusers. Rather, we use the above terms to sketch a layered dreamscape of teaching that is touched by all three, and likely more. We suggest that the teachers of our study collectively shift the dream of education from one of mastery to one of natality that poses a tension at the heart of the teacher’s work. While teaching may be enjoyed as a promise of happy endings, teachers reside in the mismatch between the structures they inherit and formations that are still possible, and in this gap, dreams thrive.

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Notes

1. As we were writing this paper, uprisings emerged around the globe in protest against centuries of anti-Black racism that have led to the murder of too many, including more recently, George Floyd. These uprisings also came in a context of the Coronavirus-19 pandemic that made social life all the more precarious, particularly for Black and poor peoples who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 because of systemic racism and enduring social inequities. While our paper is not about these events, both anti-Black racism and the COVID-19 pandemic infuse our words, reminding us that memories and dreams are thoroughly social and political. We do not know how excessive policing or the spread of COVID-19 would have changed the memories recalled by the prospective teachers of our study. But we do wish to note, in retrospect, that when participants recall memories of racism, they also call for the dismantling of the education system and for a radical reimagination of teaching committed to the creation of viable social conditions for marginalized children

and youth. In our current context of virus, violence, and social change, we hope our paper can help readers think about how racism affects childhood memories and future dreams, how memory may be put to use to expose social injustices, to dream of education otherwise, and to raise questions about who will be willing to undertake this critical labor.

2. Freud himself came to make a distinction between dreams as wish-fulfillment and as carriers of real-life concerns. Indeed, he changed his mind about the former in favour of the latter. As Jonathan Lear (2005) explains,

Freud eventually abandoned the idea that every dream was the gratification of a wish. In particular, he left open the possibility that a dream might be a manifestation—and representation—of anxiety. And anxiety can be a realistic response to the world. (p. 116)

The change Lear notes is important, for, in Freud’s new formulation, dreams are relational, situated forms of knowledge, rather than solipsistic, internally-driven pursuits.
3. The memories under examination in this article are drawn from narratives of those enrolled in teacher education programs (40/42). Only two participants enrolled in childhood studies placed their childhood memory inside the walls of the school.

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The Anxious Underworld of Teacher Education

Reading and Representing the School Dream in Comics Form

DAVID LEWKOWICH

University of Alberta, Department of Secondary Education

BENEATH THE VISIBLE, LEGIBLE, QUANTIFIABLE CURRENTS of classroom life lays a seething vortex of ambient, proto-cultural form, “unsigned, unreadable, and unsymbolized” (de Certeau, 1984, p. xvii). Between what can and cannot be expressed, there remains a constant flow of emotion and embodied, unclear gestures: stutters, bursts of nervous energy, slowly closing eyes, sighs of disinterest, flits of unformed feeling, posturing, sleepy smiles. This unseen world outside resembles an unseen inner world, and much like the dust that floats in the air, which is rarely noticed except through a slant of unbidden light, our seemingly sovereign nodes of conscious thought are incessantly interwoven by something else, a displacement away from the self-obsessed authorities of waking life. “It is what dreams teach us,” Cixous (1993) claimed, “not to be afraid of not being the driver” (p. 100), yet on waking, we hardly remember these visual poems that suddenly appear and disappear without entrance or exit.

In recognition of this inarticulable quality of psychic and social existence, I often ask students to dive into the fray of what Winnicott (2005) titled *potential space*: an “intermediate area of experiencing” (p. 3), “between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived” (p. 70), running the gamut from children’s play to various forms of cultural experience. As an example of such activity, fusing intellect and intuition, I will here share scenes from a number of comics created by students enrolled in an undergraduate course on multimodal literacies. Since these visual narratives describe dreams that are set in school, they also represent a step towards and through the subterranean zones of teacher education.

Though we all presumably possess the capacity to experience the seductive force of dreaming, it seems that most of the time we are asked to stay awake and alert in school, where “stark truth” (Winnicott, 1987, p. 236) and expectations of clarity matter most. This disavowal, however, is not without consequence, and especially because our psychic life cannot simply be willed away, I use this paper to pose the question of what it means to *think with* rather than *away from* the naughty and frightful fact of dreams. In what follows, I first conceptualize my

understanding of dreaming as a creative form of thinking, to which I relate a number of published examples of comics with characters whose dreams take place in school. I then describe the context of my class, as well as the themes, patterns, and aesthetic motifs employed by students in their artistic creations.

The Dream

While most of us likely associate dreaming with the hours of sleep, I follow such psychoanalytic thinkers as Bion (1962), Milner (2010), Meltzer (2009), and Ogden (2003, 2010), who consider dreaming as a form of thinking that persists in day as well as night. Though dreams are at their most prominent when encountered as night narratives, the act of dreaming continues throughout the day in what Bion (1962) referred to as “unconscious waking thinking” (p. 25). We usually ignore these daytime meanings, however, as they are eclipsed and censored by the convincing and forceful logics of conscious thought. Of his understanding of this dialectical relationship, Ogden (2010) wrote: “Just as the light of the stars in the sky is obscured by the glare of the sun during the day, dreaming continues while we are awake, though it is obscured by the glare of waking life” (p. 328). In the context of teacher education, I consider how preservice teachers continue to dream through the “glare of waking life,” as I also question how to best perceive this richness of meaning.

The first possibility involves attending to the insights of psychoanalysis, whose techniques are concerned precisely with the creation of synthetic circumstances (such as the drama of transference and the ritual of free association) to initiate the patient’s “discovery of what was already there in herself” (Winnicott, 1989, p. 316). In therapy, the focus of conversation is meant to eventually shift to areas of consciousness more closely resembling dream life, thus, calling into question the borders of inside and outside that we maintain, precariously, in waking life. As a psychic model for states of mind that are less mediated by the compromises of language and culture, many psychoanalytic thinkers look to childhood as an especially rich site for observing the external manifestations of internal conflicts, including what Farley (2011) called “the mind’s reel of dreams” (p. 24). For instance, Klein (1955) considered the child’s play with toys as comparable to the adult’s free associative drifts, while Milner (2010) contended that since children, “live so much of their lives ... in a state where dream and external reality are fused” (p. 108), their drawings communicate a curious lack of differentiation between the world of thoughts and things, which is also suggested as a psychic position to which we may subsequently return as adults. For Milner, this return is made particularly manifest in artistic practices that avoid the “over-linguistic bias of traditional education” (p. 142).

In Meltzer’s (2009) view, dreams are directly connected to the poetic potential of everyday life; “they are,” he wrote, “the function of the mind which deals with ... aesthetic experience” (p. 29). In this understanding, dreams are more than just an internal vision or projection of internal desires, but a mental process through which external events become internally significant and thinkable. Along with Bion (1962), Meltzer’s (2009) understanding of dream analysis asked how dreamers learn from experience to create their dreams, which involves the reciprocal work of making unconscious links between psychic and social activity. As Ogden (2003) described this mental condition of reciprocity, it is only through dreaming—a process of making experience psychically meaningful—that people may learn to imagine their world differently, and in this context, dreaming is a feature of mental health and freedom of thought. As he noted, “A person

unable to learn from (make use of) experience,” or in other words, a person unable to dream, “is imprisoned in the hell of an endless, unchanging world of what is” (p. 19).

Developing a language of dreaming, thus, invites a reconsideration of how the various boundaries that shape our lives—inside and outside, self and other, body and mind, possible and impossible, knowing and not knowing, etc.—may be denaturalized and imagined differently. Inspiring such acts of reconsideration among preservice teachers, my hope is that students may learn to “rediscover the night hidden within the day” (Cixous, 1993, p. 104) of school.

The Comic

Suddenly and Without Transition

If dreams convey an impression of life continuously interrupted, arranged, and rearranged by a mixture of the seen and unseen, comics appear especially well suited to address this dynamic. Indeed, as Yoe (2013) surmised, “Comics are more like dreams than any other medium” (p. 5), since the unique structure of comics, where action and story is regularly interrupted by moments of pause, “works to replicate the staccato, fragmented style of dream narratives” (p. 5). Following this structural feature of comics, numerous scholars have also argued that readers’ interactions depend on both what does and does not appear on the page. Between the panels, readers are thrust into what McCloud (1993) famously called “the limbo of the gutter,” where in the blank spaces dividing the frames, “human imagination takes two separate images and transforms them into a single idea” (p. 66). As an example, we can look to the following panels from “The Big Seep,” a story by Moore (2006) featured in *Tomorrow Stories*.



In these panels, we find Splash Brannigan, a parodic representation of a film-noir private investigator, in the midst of a dream sequence that suddenly transports him back to school. The first panel finds Splash in an environment containing a number of obvious references to Salvador Dali’s paintings, while in the second panel, he sits at a desk in the anxiety-provoking, overfamiliar

setting of a school exam. Tellingly, the overfamiliar quality of this particular setting led Freud (1900/1999) to include such dreams among his “typical dreams,” which along with nakedness, flying, and experiencing the death of a loved one are dreams that are common enough that most of us have experienced similar versions of them. As we will see, many of the preservice teachers in my class also imagined their stories in a similar dream environment.

Separating the two scenes in the above comic is a squiggly gutter, across which the reader inserts an expectation of continuity, and though we do not actually see Splash move between these scenes, the gutter gives the reader permission to link these otherwise unrelated environments. In the following dream sequence from Morrison and Janson’s (1990) “Gothic,” we find another example of a setting change *without transition*, in which Bruce Wayne (as Batman) is suddenly transported from the water’s edge into a classroom.



This sudden change of context, however, is actually quite characteristic of dreams in general, and in this sense, the gutter is the closest narrative equivalent to what Ogden (2005) called the “frontier of dreaming”: the moment, “alive with ... desire” (p. 9), before one category of experience becomes another. The following scene from Charles Burns’ (1989) “Teen Plague” shows just how quickly and dramatically perspectives and appearances can shift within the dream, as well as across the gutter.



Since as soon as we close our eyes or cross the gutter we find ourselves moving from a world of indeterminacy to one whose story is already written, focusing on the gutter—between the before and the after—is a way of illuminating where dreamers, as well as readers, may be thinking of the possibilities of dreaming rather than the seeming inevitabilities of waking life.

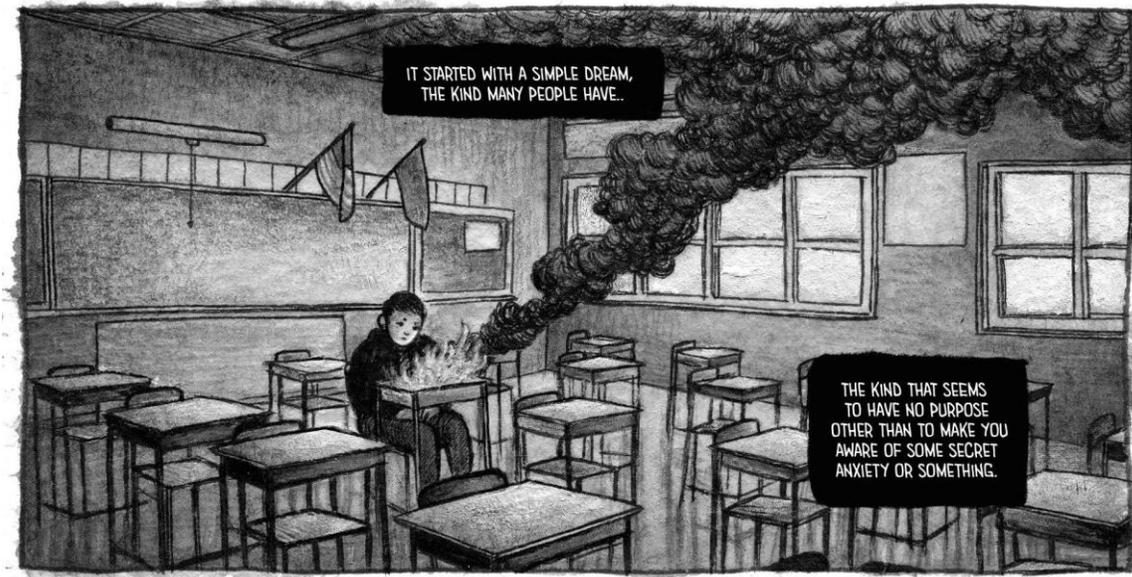
As Low (2012) noted, while all texts have their “spots of indeterminacy” (p. 369), because of the conspicuously “conjunctive feature” (p. 372) of the gutter, comics help to visualize the inherently

dialogic nature of reading experience. By focusing on “what is ostensibly left *off* of each comics page” (p. 371), or what the reader *imagines* rather than what they *see*, we may be able to better understand how meaning is always an arbitrary and alterable condition. For Chute (2011), since such meaning is often activated “through incompleteness” (p. 283), it is only because the story is unfinished that we are able to give it meaning. As with classroom life, the illegible aspects of comics are just as significant as the features of text that are more immediately grasped.

Withdrawal

To relate this process of reading to my larger discussion in this paper, when encountering comics of dreams that are set in school, we should look to how the dream enacts and communicates a distortion of classroom life. We may then consider what these revisions propose about education’s “underworld” (Britzman, 2006, p. 135), where desire perpetually forms and reforms at the frontier of dreaming, at the very edge of legibility. As a description of such distortion in the context of analytic reverie, Ogden (2005) described “a withdrawal from the logic, demands, and distractions of external reality that is analogous to the ‘darkness’ of sleep” (p. 5). Generating a similar experience of withdrawal, turning deliberately away from conscious images and perceptions of classroom life may allow for the representation of less acceptable, less articulable

forms of being in school. These are forms of being, as Taussig (2011) wrote, that are “on another plane” (p. 7), and the question here is how and whether to make the passage between these planes increasingly porous, even if what is encountered remains a secret. This panel from Conrad and Bailey’s (2019) *Tremor Dose* articulates just how dreams can speak a secret—“the beating presence of it, its feeling” (Cixous, 1993, p. 85)—without actually spelling out its meaning.

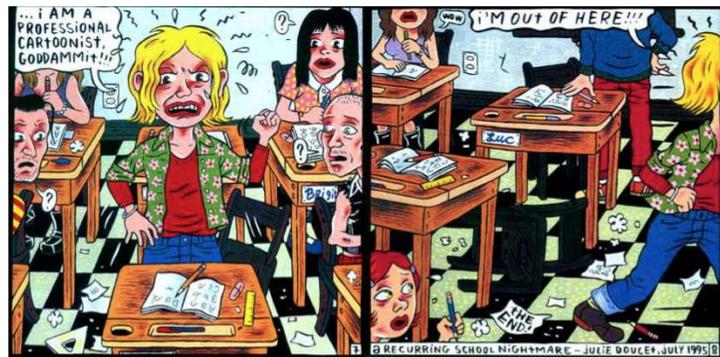


For the dreamer, who is “subject to division, but to uncertain purposes” (Phillips, 2006, p. 111), it often seems that moments of passage require, at least in fantasy, the destruction of what

was previously considered permanent. For instance, in this classic strip by Bushmiller (1951/2014), Nancy is only able to withdraw from consciousness once she has dreamed the destructive and violent image of an exploding schoolhouse.



Though a less violent manifestation, Doucet (2006) also expressed a withdrawal from school in a short comic that describes a recurring nightmare in the form of a wish: to suddenly recognize the unnecessary nature of school and to simply walk out. While she is not really being tested, this comic contains a similar “carnival of affects” (guilt, fear,



shame, loathing, etc.) to the aforementioned examination dreams, which in their intensity, “signal things far more archaic than the affective tie that schooling both obscured and animates” (Britzman, 2006, p. 135). Such dreams about school are thus very often not about school at all, or rather, not necessarily *only* about school. Finding oneself in the wrong place at the wrong time, being unprepared for an oral report – as in the panel below from Veitch’s (1996) *Rare Bit Fiends*—forgetting important facts, not being listened to, being treated as a child in the body of an adult—as in the 1952 example from *The Strange World of Your Dreams* (Yoe, 2013)—these dreams appear to use the familiar environment of school to stage and communicate a variety of childhood experiences and wishes: of wanting to leave the family but not being able to, “of learning to live with beloved and hated others” (Britzman, 2006, p. 135), and of circumstances where desire exceeds the practical capacity for satisfaction.



In this example of a dream from Batiuk’s (2019) *Funky Winkerbean*, we encounter the titular character returning to the scene of frustrated adolescent desire, in a state of panic and distress.



Startled awake, this dream indicates the timeless nature of unconscious life, and that even though we may consider ourselves as adults who have long outgrown our childhood wishes, the dream dismantles such delusions of maturity. Since the dream’s undifferentiated nature allows for child, adolescent, and adult to coexist, dreaming demonstrates the ultimate sign that psychic borders (of memory, consciousness, maturity, etc.) will always remain porous, insecure, and movable. Given the childhood origins of school dreams and the fact that a school experience may represent so much more than the student’s harried life, we unfortunately cannot offer our startled dreamer any consolation. When it comes to the aftereffects of childhood, if we follow the evidence of our dreams, there is nothing resembling a “statute of limitations.”

The Class

Dreams about school are, therefore, “less [about] analogy than ... recovery” (Rose, 2003, p. 119) and a reencounter with the timeless, enfolded, reciprocal relations of psychic life. For students engaged in the process of learning to teach, talking about dreams encourages a shift in thinking—even if momentary—from the conscious and cognitive to the emotional, embodied, and desiring. Following Lawrence et al. (2017), who explored comics creation as “a mode of inquiry into teachers’ stories” (p. 1), this section of the paper will focus on the comics of preservice teachers who used their narratives to think about the psychic life of teaching from the vantage point of dreams.

As I was first preparing for this spring 2020 course in the initial weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was challenged by the sudden move to online learning to create activities that built community and invited vulnerability, while also asking students to experiment with multimodal strategies of representation. While I had taught online classes before, doing so in a pandemic was certainly a new experience, and just as the dream involves a withdrawal away from conscious concern, I wondered to what extent the novelty of social isolation might encourage a turn inward. In our opening class, I asked my students, who came from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, to consider how their dream lives may be affected by the pandemic and by their new arrangements of living.

As a class, we read an online news article (Lynall, 2020), whose title asked the question, “Is coronavirus stress to blame for the rise in bizarre ‘lockdown dreams’?” Complementing the ways that dreams can affect our expectations of surface and depth, the author of this article noted, “It’s a strange irony that as our waking hours become more monotonous, our nighttime lives seem more varied” (n.p.). Preparing these students for their assignment, I described how dreams set in school may communicate our hidden desires and anxieties regarding teaching, while also making us “spectators of ... unintelligible” (Phillips, 2006, p. 108) and forgotten educational histories. Indeed, I wondered out loud if by positioning ourselves as dreamers *of* and *in* school, we may be able to communicate something about educational life that cannot be otherwise put into words.

Along with the aforementioned comics, I shared a couple school scenes from Winsor McCay’s comics, and a few panels from *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (Gollhofer & DeCarlo, 1998) where Sabrina falls asleep and dreams her teacher in the image of a gorilla, which since she possesses magical powers, transforms her *actual* teacher into an *actual* gorilla.



After guiding my students through these comics, I shared the following thoughts regarding the relationship between dreaming and visual literacy:

- Since dreams are inherently visual structures, their meaning potentials are like those of multimodal ensembles, and regardless of what the dream communicates, it always communicates something visual about *education's underworld*.
- Dreams are *timeless*, which means that in the dream, we can be simultaneously child and adult, student and teacher, interacting with people we have not seen for years.
- Dreams distort reality; “In our dreams we can do things and things are done that we can’t do and can’t be done” (Phillips, 2006, p. 108).
- Dreams work metaphorically, where through a process of condensation, multiple ideas and experiences may be expressed through a single symbol, person, or event.
- Dreams also work by displacement, where the meaning of something important may be shifted to something decidedly less so, as the dreamer’s emotions may be expressed differently than in waking life.
- If most of the time, we rely on the difference between thoughts and things as a way to safely position ourselves in an unpredictable world, dreaming admits that *there are always other ways of ordering human experience*.
- I then asked these students to consider the following: *How can you use the dream to give voice to that which is disturbing and preposterous about school? How can your dream represent your innermost fears, anxieties, wishes and desires about school—the otherwise unrepresentable and impossible psychic life of education?*

I also made sure that students knew the value of their work had nothing to do with questions of aesthetic beauty or artistic skill. As I wrote in the course outline: *Rest assured, the point of this activity is not about your drawing skills, but simply to make an attempt at comics creation. Though the comic itself can be a straightforward, sequential narrative, since dreams themselves are never straightforward, you may also want to think about how to evoke the mood of your dream, while simultaneously telling its story.*

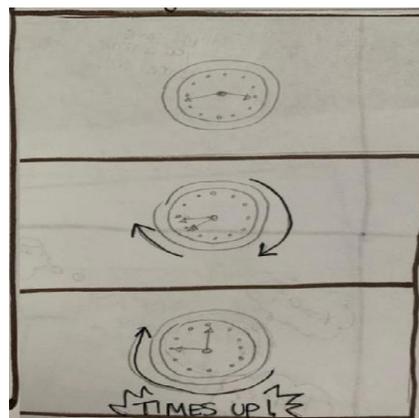
Reading these Comics

In the following discussion, I recognize that while *constructed as dreams*, these comics are actually closer in character to Winnicott’s (1989) *potential space*: “the intermediate area ... which is neither dream nor object-relating” (p. 204), but an unresolvable combination of both. As a waking dream that uses metaphor—which we may also call art—to join the gap between inner and outer experience, these comics involve a journey to Cixous’ (1993) “School of Dreams,” in which “something must be displaced ... [w]alking through the self toward the dark” (p. 65). By displacing the primacy of language, they are also evidence of what can happen when teacher education encounters the knowledge of literature at the “frontier of dreaming” (Ogden, 2004), where “symbolically mediated self-consciousness ... is powerfully shaped and colored by what lies outside of conscious awareness” (p. 10). Since literary knowledge, like that of dreams, “is not authoritative” (Felman, 1982, p. 41), these comics tell stories that “are not made [explicitly] for the purpose of being understood” (Britzman, 2009, p. x). In recognition of what remains unthinkable in dreams and literature, I, therefore, approach these comics with something other than

simply understanding in mind. In brief, I am not here to provide conclusions, but instead to read the traces. As an interpretive principle, I follow Lear's (2005) advice that "the essence of a dream is not its hidden content, but the activity of dreaming" (p. 115), and as such, I will not be looking for hidden meanings about the authors' psychic lives, but describing how these students have used dreaming as a form of thinking about teacher education. I should also mention that most of these students had already spent considerable time in the classroom as student teachers, enduring the challenge of entering schools "in contexts that they themselves did not set up" (Britzman, 2003, p. 216). Looking forward to their post-university lives, these comics reflect anxieties and desires about teaching, as well as histories formed and forgotten while being a student in school. In what follows, I share examples from these students' comics, in relation to the general themes of time, space, and embodied performance.

Passing Time

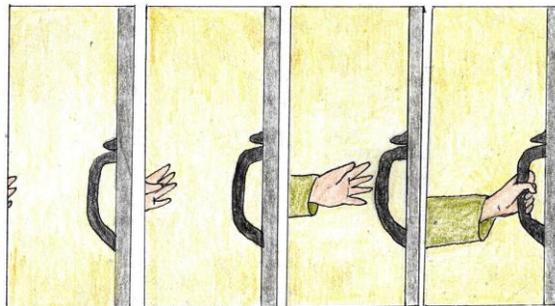
Despite the timeless nature of the unconscious, symbols of time appear in many of these comics, and in the form of the ever-ubiquitous clock, as an emotional recognition of the inevitably of time passing and time lacking. In two of these comics, the story opens with the protagonist's realization that they are late for an exam, as they spend the rest of the story frantically trying to catch up, inevitably failing to do so. In the example below, Leshya's character wakes up and immediately recognizes that she has forgotten about an important exam. Once she gets to school, however, she doesn't know any of the answers, and time flies by, seemingly out of her control.



In Shilo’s comic, an alarm once again appears in the opening panel, and as the protagonist struggles to get to her exam, every step she takes only seems to further upset her ability to make it on time. Crossing between the third and fourth panel, the mental image of a clock physically impresses upon our hero’s head, as does a similarly structured image of the word “FAIL” in the sixth panel.



Since the effects of these images echo each other, a fear of failure is closely associated with a fear of being late, as their mounting rhythm suggests a continuous and inescapable tension. Though Shilo’s character is able to slow down later in the story, captured in the use of a motion-to-motion transition between four panels, when she finally opens the door she is in a random hallway, which is absolutely not where her exam is being held. As the comic ends, she leaves the reader with her final thoughts, “I’m going to fail,” as she walks toward a distant, unknown source of darkness.

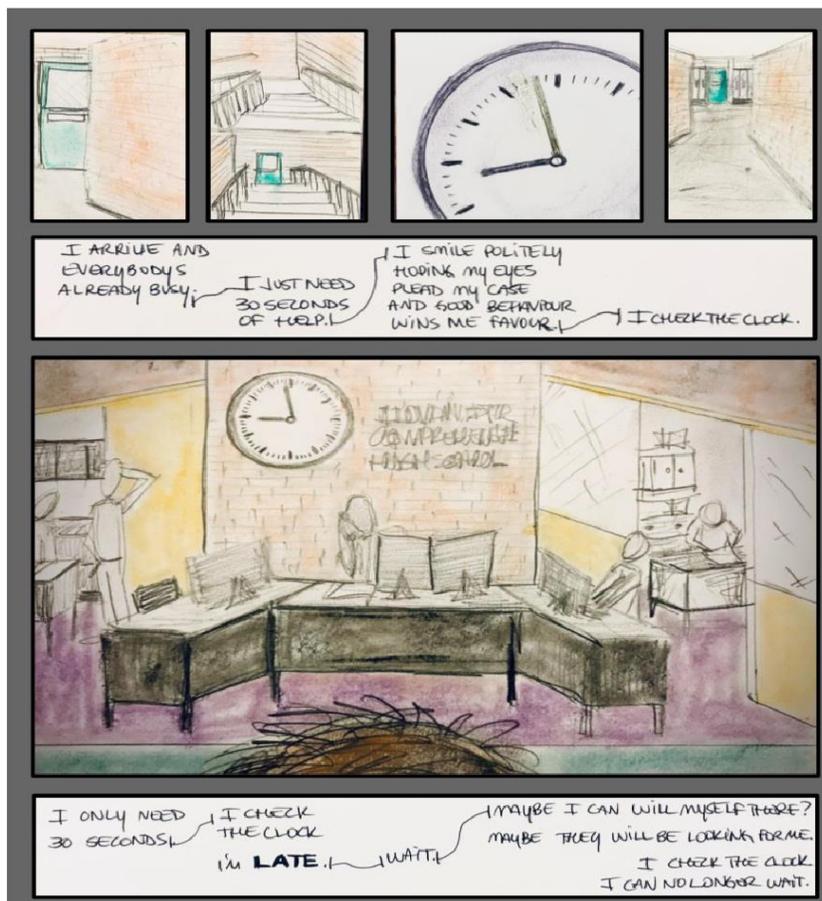


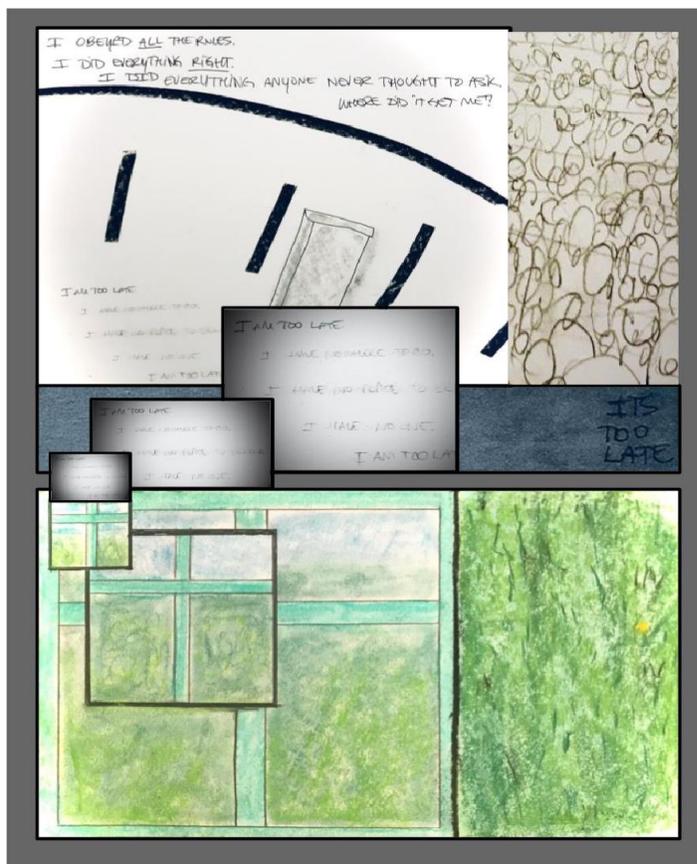


Though this move to darkness happens literally *in the blink of an eye*, the fact that it takes three separate panels to show this blink indicates the prospect of slowing time, and that—despite its likelihood—there may be ways to delay the arrival of failure. Since death is often associated with *walking towards the light*, this character’s walk to darkness may also represent a journey to life, though one that is filled with no small degree of uncertainty. As she continues to walk and overcome while also experiencing impossibility, a quote from Samuel Beckett’s (1994) *The Unnameable* comes

to mind: “I don’t know, I’ll never know, in the silence you don’t know, you must go on, I can’t go on, I’ll go on” (p. 418).

Camila’s comic, which reads like a poem, with repetitive words that signal an ever-mounting sense of anxiety, also uses the inescapable presence of the school clock to evoke the daily experience of rushing to class. In the opening stanza, the character is late to school, and her words focus on the visceral act of pushing: “I push through the doors. I push through the bodies. I push past the chatter. I push in between their energy. My stomach feels tight.” As the comic progresses, the character moves from pushing, to shoving, to running, to sliding, to creeping, to tiptoeing.



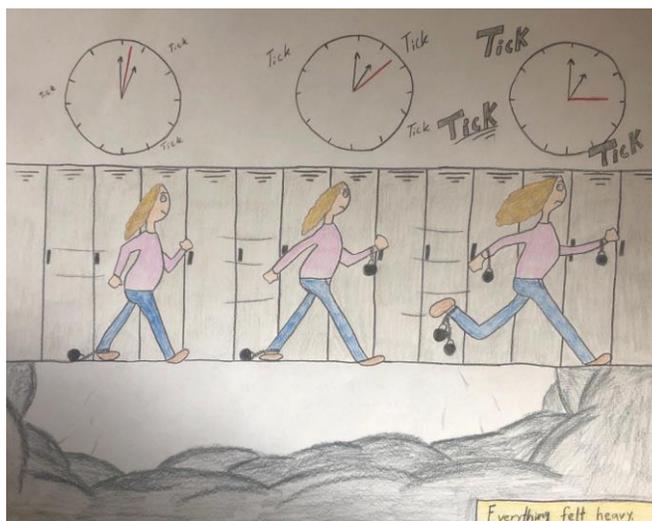


In the end, however, these movements amount to nothing: “I obeyed all the rules. I did everything right. I did everything anybody never thought to ask. Where did it get me? I am too late.” Once again, the notion of time is that of an inexorable, unreasonable force. Throughout this text, the author also repeats the phrase “I check the clock” six times, as the clock’s image appears at a similar frequency.

On Camila’s last page, the tone of her art changes, as the author folds the story into itself (“I am too late. I have nowhere to go. I have no place to be. I have no one. I am too late”), as if retreating and stopping time. The story then unfolds into a different landscape: one that is green, lush, pastel, organic, and wordless, all the things that Camila’s story of school is definitively not. Given this radical difference, it is worth considering what this turn away from school may represent, and while on the one hand, it may be read as an

emancipatory gesture directed toward a stifling world, it could also be read as instance of magical thinking, “an attack both on the recognition of reality and on thinking itself” (Ogden, 2010, p. 322). In this comic, these two options, thus, appear as a choice; that school may drive us to disavowal bordering psychosis (magical thinking), just as it also may kindle a search for beauty and alternate futures (dreaming).

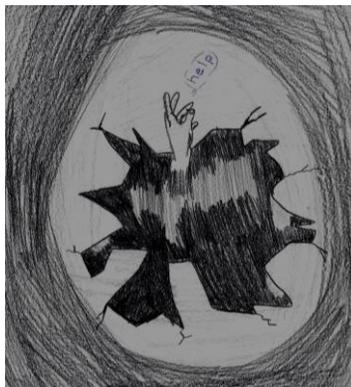
In Betty’s comic, the experience of being lost in school is once again partnered with passing time, here described as a sensation of physical encumbrance and restraint. “Everything felt heavy,” the character narrates, as her limbs are saddled with multiple shackles, resembling the iconic image of a ball and chain. Even though these shackles appear to vanish, a couple panels later this character is trapped in a futile, endless movement around the clock, which suggests that the clock has taken on the role of shackle and *is* the thing that weighs her down in school. Given this recurrent association between the



experience of being lost and the inevitability of passing time, I have to wonder what the dream of being lost in school would look like without these pressing demands, and whether it is even possible—as subjects in school—to dream outside of time’s flow.



Over a two-page spread, Christy offers a creative solution to the dilemma of pressing and passing time. In the first page, which follows a series of panels that represent school as strictly a terrible place (replete with bullies, uncaring teachers, social isolation, etc.), we are shown the desperate image of a hand emerging from cracked ice, as if the person below is drowning beneath the frigid waters of pain and alienation, and as they drown, a speech bubble captures a single word: *help*. On the next page, however, Christy includes a rewind symbol, indicating the possibility of recreating the past, before a time of damage and hurt. Given this wish, it is surely no surprise that the final page illustrates the main character as a superhero with apples at her feet. In the context of teacher education, this dream illustrates the ways in which teachers’ desires to help others are often intertwined with less explicit, but certainly no less powerful, desires to rescue a part of the self that was injured in school and indeed may still be hurting.



Spatial Distortion

While the trope of time appears in these comics as a way to express a loss or lack of control, some of these authors also communicated such concerns through the use of spatial distortion. In Jocelyn’s comic, for instance, the main character is thrown into a variety of peculiar circumstances, including one in which she is gifted an “elven rope” by a character from *Lord of the Rings*. While

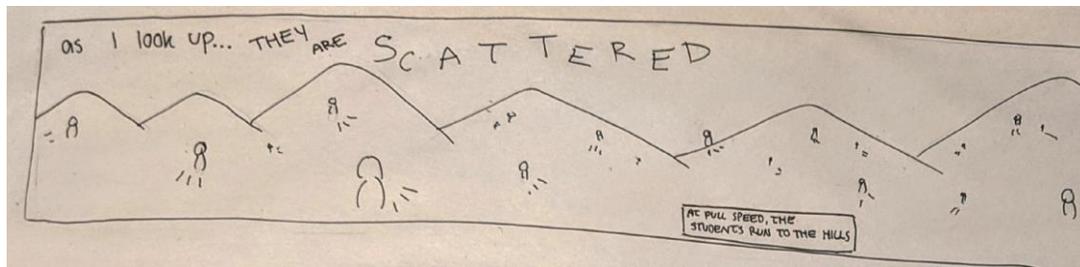


this rope initially seems to provide protection, as the dream progresses, it inhibits the teacher’s ability to form meaningful relationships with her students. As the teacher stands in front of her blackboard, facing her students with the rope around her waist, the floor in front of her suddenly slopes away: “I can’t see my students,” the character narrates, “but I know they are there ... beyond the curve.” Though the rope protects the teacher from tumbling over the cliff, her students are curiously calm, indicating that—despite their teacher’s worry—they are probably not in danger. The problem here, then, is not the students’ safety, or that they need to be rescued, but that the distance between teacher and student becomes so great as to be virtually impassable. Despite the teacher’s passion for her subject, this dream represents a teacher’s fear

that, regardless of her efforts, her teaching might actually fail to reach her students, who remain “beyond the curve,” a spatial concept linked to the “learning curve,” a traditional measurement of student progress. Far from a symbol of protection, then, the rope is actually an impediment, which prevents the teacher from taking the plunge into a space of pedagogical uncertainty. As the dream ends, the teacher is alone staring into an empty landscape, unpopulated by ideas, students, and meaning alike.



Mandy’s comic also employs the use of spatial distortion to illustrate the anxiety of pedagogical distance. As the comic opens, a teacher worries about the responsibility involved in taking a busload of students to a mountainous park; “I can’t believe they left me to watch all these students,” she thinks to herself. Then, as soon as they arrive, her fears are realized: a student falls off the bus, forcing the teacher’s attention away from the class as a whole.





Momentarily distracted, the teacher then sees her students disappearing into the mountains, and similar to Jocelyn's character, she finds herself stuck and unable to move. Not only are her students far away, she is also powerless to move herself closer. As Mandy's comic ends, we once again see the teacher alone, stuck in the mud reflecting on her failure, though her students do not actually appear in danger. Given the mud and the waning sun, however, the teacher's fate is a little less

certain. The central issue in this comic, then, is not the students' need for their teacher, but a deep unease regarding the teacher's fragile, dependent state. Given the almost identical endings in these two comics, the uses of space and distance suggest an unconscious recognition of the teacher's dependency on her students, and a fear that they alone might have the power to decide her worth and meaning.



Embodied Performance

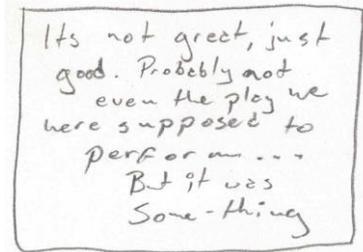
Throughout these comics, the body is a site that authors use to dream their fears and anxieties about teaching. For instance, many involve the body as an object that is easily manipulated: squeezed between other bodies; inside a tornado induced by classroom confusion; and as a source of recognition and alienation.

As the locus of the teacher's classroom identity, the body is also repeatedly proposed as a



place where knowledge is, or fails to be, enacted. Similar to the pressures of the examination dream, many of these comics have characters that find themselves in the midst of a performance that has already begun, suggesting that the pressure to perform feels like a test that is daily implemented on the teacher's body.

On the last page, Michael's character gives the following description of his efforts: "It's not great, just good. Probably not even the play we were supposed to perform ... But it was something." In the context of his position as preservice teacher, Michael's comic represents a wish that teaching might resemble something other than following a script of outcomes and methods and, in this departure from the prescriptive, allow for the uncertain ends of improvisation.



Conclusion

As Taussig (2011) described the atmospheric story of everyday life, there is "a world beyond" (p. 13) within our world, where reality as describable recedes in the face of something more imperceptible, always ongoing, beyond the reaches of language and straightforward representation. Vague and uncertain, this is a dreamy world composed of frightening, naughty affects that are hard to think about and that break us down to our most constituent parts: impulsive, unnamable reveries of rage, anger, disgust, sex, anxiety, boredom, distraction, revenge, jealousy, shame, envy, bodily attraction, and bodily distress. In their thrall, we cannot remain focused, our attention is elsewhere, colors blur, and sounds are experienced as confusingly simultaneous. More often than not, this is also a world for which education *as intellect* simply has no words. As Bibby (2015) explicitly described this split in the context of classroom life: "Enlightenment valorisations of the wakeful, rational and conscious" are typically mobilized "to the detriment of the dreamy, associative, affective and unconscious" (p. 52).

In this paper, I have explored the uses that preservice teachers make of the school dream in comics form, paying particular attention to the themes of time, space, and embodied performance. While time is experienced as an inescapable pressure and spatial distortion suggests an anxiety about pedagogical distance, the coercive nature of embodied performance indicates the preservice teacher's uncertain dance between knowing and not knowing. Importantly, though, just as dreams are metaphors for subterranean experiences and feelings that cannot be named, the affective disturbances in these comics run much deeper than words, and as such, these thematic interpretations are merely suggestions. Though dreams may be interpreted, it is also the case that no interpretation is ever sufficient. After all, as Pontalis (1993) noted, "the dream itself is already an interpretation" (p. 120) of an infinitely fragmentary experience.

However, as a narrative style whose form directly depends on gaps in meaning, comics—as "texts that escape" (Cixous, 1993, p. 98)—appear to allow for authors to trace the dreamy qualities of teaching and learning. In this sense, the value of using comics to explore the teacher's dream life is that they are inevitably imprecise and incomplete, and since their meanings are never foretold or finally settled, their approximations and imperfections bring us to a place where the limits of knowledge are constantly reinvented, including the limits of what can and cannot be thought in teacher education. To recognize the presence of gaps in our thinking without necessarily needing to fill them in, this is a lesson that comics teach, identical to that initially devised by dreams. To put it plainly, the uses of dreams and comics in this paper suggest that there are always other ways to think about the lives we lead, and in my work with preservice teachers, I truly believe that no lesson is more important than this.

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Work Group Discussions in Teacher Education

Evoking Associative Objects

H. JAMES GARRETT
University of Georgia

IN THIS PAPER, I DESCRIBE the ways that psychoanalytic theory has influenced a portion of my work as a teacher educator. Specifically, I describe a course that is part of an intensive semester of both university and secondary classroom work that student-teachers take before their semester of full-time student teaching. The course is designed with the notion that teaching, one of the impossible professions (Britzman, 2009), and learning to teach carry not only intellectual demands but also emotional demands. Given that few initial certification programs (of which I am aware) provide sustained attention to the emotional demands of learning to teach, I have endeavored over the last several years to implement a course that centers them. My intent is not to offer a set technique as a model. Rather, the purpose of this essay is to describe the way a particular kind of thinking has come to have consequences for my thinking about pedagogy and illustrations/interpretations of what those consequences have made possible. In my understanding, the dream-work of teacher education has to do with understanding and making explicit the aspects of learning to teach that, like dreams, are ineffable, often confounding, and benefit from interpretations from trusted others for further inquiry, creative exploration, and interpretation.

Psychoanalytic Thinking in/with Pedagogy

While psychoanalysis is productively deployed as a framework for literary and cultural criticism, my understanding of psychoanalysis consistently returns to the idea of it as a theory of the clinic. As a clinical theory, psychoanalysis provides a set of strategies for eliciting and attending to the kinds of emotional vagaries that make for stuck places, dissatisfactions, and frustrations that attend our living with ourselves and others. We go to psychoanalysis to be confronted with the parts of ourselves that are out to get us and consider what we might do with those parts of ourselves other than letting them get us. That we are defended against knowing those things is a process borne of outside (social) and inside (subjective) experiences that become

habitual. Our orientations toward knowledge are marked by oscillations between knowing, wanting to know, and turning away from knowing (Felman, 1982).

I have found psychoanalysis to be a clinical theory worth considering in the context of the classroom (Britzman & Pitt, 2004). In my thinking and practice, though, I do not conflate the work of psychoanalysis with the work of teaching; these are markedly different endeavors. People do not go to classrooms for the same reasons they go to psychoanalysis. People go to classrooms, mostly, either because they are compelled to through laws and practices (through compulsory education and professional training) or because they are employed there (as teachers or professors). Despite these differences between psychoanalysis and education, the classroom can be understood as being home to some similar fundamental dimensions. What happens in the clinic of the classroom, when understood through theories that illuminate the dynamic pushes and pulls of psychical life, is beyond what occurs in the narrow lanes of academic content delivery and its acquisition by students. The classroom is also populated by the psychical lives of the teacher and the student, the social and political discourses of the time, and the histories of all of these that meet in often strange ways in school. Psychoanalysis is as much a way to make sense of what is happening as it is a strategy to foster those happenings.

The notion that people mean more than what we can say and that what we say carries more meanings than we know points to a pedagogical scene rich for inquiry about just what it is we teacher educators are up to when we say we are up to the education of future teachers. Psychoanalytic theories direct us to question ourselves anytime we think we have “the” answer and so frustrate any desire for the end of inquiry or the settling of a problem. For instance, psychoanalytic theories assist in critiques of the regime of accountability and “value-added” education in elaborating the fantasy of making rigid boundaries around groups of children who are either “on-track” or “behind.” However, psychoanalytic inquiry will also point that same critique of rigid boundaries around categories that I happen to like better—racist and anti-racist, for instance (Taubman, 2012). In this way, thinking about teaching and learning and learning to teach in a psychoanalytic view urges us to privilege meanings that are unstable and shifting as much as we honor the need for practices as teachers undertake the work of helping students understand their role in the world.

Psychoanalytic ways of thinking provide a vocabulary to acknowledge interior life but maintain a simultaneous acknowledgment that there is no separating that interiority from relations in social and political situations. Psychoanalysis, Frosh (2018) contended, “has what is probably the most developed vocabulary and conceptual armory that offers the required theoretical resources for understanding and interiority that also moves across boundaries” (p. 10). Those boundaries, blurry and questionably helpful as concepts, are troubled because of the necessary sociality of our being alive.

In this view, as Britzman (2015) wrote, education is a place “of affecting content where characters come to lose and make up the mind” (p. 149). As such, she continued, “we might enlarge our view of the favorable human condition” if we allow ourselves to see education as a place where we experiment with the oscillations of the ways in which facing and turning away from knowledge are facilitated (p. 149). Similarly, in group life, as French (1987) wrote, “simply being with others stimulates primitive, existential anxieties: In what sense will we meet? At what level can we affect each other? Will I be accepted or rejected, liked, loved or hated, ignored or not even noticed?” (p. 484). In classrooms, we are in situations of group life where the above questions are necessarily present and perpetually being asked and answered in a variety of ways. What this means is that, at the same time that students are offering views about one issue or another, whatever the content of

the day is, they are also asking those questions or trying to answer them about what significance their words have, how they work once they are part of a social environment, and what happens as a result.

One of the things that Deborah Britzman (2006, 2007) has frequently noted is that education research ought to be careful in considering that students aren't the only people in the classroom who have a psychology. Her critique is that there is a kind of one-sidedness or unidirectionality in much literature on teaching. The students are identified with differentiated abilities, learning styles, issues, problems, skills, and the like. Lately, there has been a push to develop understandings of classroom life that connect those abilities, issues, and skills *in relation*: to culture (as in culturally relevant pedagogies), society, the rules of schooling, and the like. However, much less has been forwarded about the interpretive moves made by teachers when they identify those relationships. That is, the students aren't the only ones in the classroom with a culture, a social situation, a relation to rules and authority, and a relation to their own tendencies toward aggression, rigid thinking, or self-persecution. Teachers have relations, too.

Work Group Discussions

Below, I present a course I've developed, informed by psychoanalytic principles and taught in the context of a secondary social studies initial certification program with the intent of creating a space of shared psychological processes. The course centers on the psychodynamic aspects of learning to teach, specifically the confusing nature of returning to schools as teachers and the confounding, frustrating, boring, exhilarating moments that occur therein (Britzman, 2003). Before presenting that course, I'll begin the paper by describing the basis for its construction.

The course, what I've called an "observation seminar," is based on my understanding of the Tavistock Model of workgroup discussion seminars (Rustin, 2008). These spaces are meant to, depending on the setting, provide groups of people with a structured space to explore the emotional demands of professional life. In contrast to spaces that are focused on problem-solving, the purpose of the workgroup discussion is not to correct mistakes or figure out the solution to a problem. The workgroup discussion model is meant to "sharpen perceptions and to enhance the exercise of imagination so that a richer understanding of the personality interactions described may ensue, based on evidence of motivation springing from internal unconscious sources" (Rustin, 2008, n.p.)

Most frequently, workgroup discussions are populated by helping professionals: nurses, teachers, social workers, and the like. The format, as I have learned it, is based on a model of infant observation that is part of psychoanalytic training. In infant observation, the person in training spends a prolonged amount of time observing an infant in their home with their caretaker. The task is to attend not only to what the observer "sees," but to experience that observation as a relation between the observer and the observed. The task is to attend to both what is happening and what that happening provokes in the observer. Then, after the observation is over, one is meant to write a detailed account of that observation—without interpretation and without theorizing. Then, in the workgroup discussion, these written accounts are read out loud and collective conversation about them is undertaken. The task, that is, requires a prolonging of uncertainty and an extension of the time between experience and its interpretation. What that means is that this process is an intervention into the impulse to collapse experience and meaning into the same act. The reason why such an extension of the time between experience and interpretation is needed is because of the tendency to give way to the felt urgency of "needing to know." The idea here is not to abdicate

responsibility for being a custodian of some professional and procedural knowledge as teacher educators. Rather, the idea is to make spaces for teachers to confront the idea that procedural knowledge is not going to be a shield against the other kinds of knowledge that are needed to move through classroom spaces in ways that enliven the pedagogical encounter. There, what is needed is an openness to emotional and affective experience—the students’ and the teachers’.

The Difference Between Observation and Interpretation

As noted above, the workgroup discussions, while based on the foundational work of infant observation, are attended by people who are helping professionals. The goal is to extend, to the degree possible, the time between what we observe and the settling of the meaning of what we see. It means slowing down and considering a range of possible explanations, where those explanations come from, and which have emotional purchase for us, and why. The widening of our interpretive capacities as teachers is crucial, as it permits a kind of curiosity as opposed to other types of practical certainty. If a student has their head down during a lesson, a collapse of experience and meaning may mean that the teacher quickly assumes the student is being obstinate (or tired, or bored, or sick) and then acts upon that ascribed meaning. In a practice that extends the time between experience and meaning, the teacher would be encouraged to remain curious about the student, to inquire, and proceed cautiously.

While that is a relatively simple illustration, student teachers arrive in their preparation programs with all kinds of ready-made theories about who students are and what they are up to in classrooms. One particularly poignant meaning that student teachers make about students they observe in their classrooms who do not hand in their work regularly is that those students “do not care about their education.” The focus of a method that interrupts this sort of meaning-making is on all the kinds of inferences and assumptions that we’d have to make on the road to this final move to closing down inquiry into the settled knowledge that someone doesn’t care about their education. The purpose is to notice behaviors and then note as internal reactions (rather than settled meanings) what kinds of thoughts and feelings are enlivened. Put simply, there is a road to knowing other than the road to settled knowledge.

Waddell (2006) has described that, during infant observations, the observer is put in proximity to

perpetually changing emotions of, for example, peace and disturbance, bliss and terror, anxiety and fulfilment, discomfort and relaxation, whether in parent, baby, sibling or self. There may be states of intense suffering, of the horror of disintegration, or of ‘free-fall’. By contrast, there may also be states of relief and satisfaction, of the registering of beauty and even of awe, of difficulties overcome and turmoil quelled. Or, indeed, there may be feelings of inadequacy, of competitiveness and envy, or of anger and fear. The immediacy of the realities of life and death, whether literal or psychological, can never be far from the mind. (p. 1111)

What Waddell was pointing to here is that, when we are attending to scenes of intimate relations, our histories of intimate relations are animated as we attempt to make sense of what is occurring. In connecting this kind of method of paying a particular kind of attention to the clinic of teacher education, I note that not many teacher education programs that I know of attempt to make

significance from discomfort, anxiety, disturbance, terror, or disintegration. Yet all teachers know that those experiences are never, as Waddell (2006) said, “far from the mind” (p. 1111). Rather than relegate them to the teachers’ lounge or the bar after school on a Friday, this model of workgroup brings those features of classroom life to the center.

Dream-thought

While the workgroup discussions do not ask participants to record their dreams, the kind of work is aligned with more common notions of “dreamwork.” Here, I think with Ogden’s (2004) notion (following Bion) that “dreaming occurs both during sleep and waking life” (p. 1355). Ogden explained,

Dream-thought is an unconscious thought generated in response to lived emotional experience and constitutes the impetus for the work of dreaming, that is, the impetus for doing unconscious psychological work with unconscious thought derived from lived emotional experience. (p. 1355)

Ogden’s idea is that the dream-thought is not relegated to what happens when we sleep. Rather, dream-thought is the thinking done in relationship to emotional realities of lived experiences that then put pressure on unconscious processes. Ogden (2007) wrote further that talking-as-dreaming means the “experience of understanding (getting to know) something of the meanings of the emotional situation being faced” (p. 576). What occurs in dream-thought, or in talking-as-dreaming, in other words, is that which instantiates psychological work. I take this view of the workgroup discussion, that it invites a kind of dreamwork through the function of centering what is difficult, often ineffable, and frustrating about the particular experiences of learning to teach.

The Observation Seminar

The course is embedded in a program and with colleagues with whom I share a broad and shared understanding that teacher education is a fraught and complicated space. We frame teaching as a relational project that requires cultural and historical awareness, community engagement, responsiveness, and critical orientations. We have had a committed and close partnership with the local school district and imbed much of our teacher education programs in those clinical spaces, though we now know that these relationships have been exploded due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the abject failure to contain it on the part of national, state, and university leaders. We acknowledge that students come with their own histories of learning, cultural experiences, and political views. We prompt them to reflect and reflect some more in guided encounters with ever more responsibilities in the classroom. Students take this course during an intense academic semester that has carried with it high stakes performance assessments like the edTPA that represented a burden on them and on us.

Over the last several years as the program has been revised in this clinically based setting, I’ve had the great fortune of designing and teaching a course that I call an “observation seminar.” Given the intensity of the experiences (coursework and fieldwork), my colleagues and I thought it would be appropriate to have a class that was devoted to exploring the emotional demands of

learning to teach. Specifically, we acknowledge that the majority (though not all) of our students have always been academically successful—they have, in other words, not had the experience of doing things “not well.” We thought it important that we make a space where they are honest about the difficulties of the endeavors of learning to teach. After all, in disposition surveys that are required by our state certification board, students have to profess an increasing warmth and faith in all students. But no one ever talks to them about what might happen if they don’t like a particular student. No one ever engages in a formal way about what happens when their elegant lesson plan, this thing to which they’ve devoted hours and hours, is met with indifference by their students. There are not official spaces in many teacher education programs where student teachers might be engaged with how to interpret that frustration. How are they supposed to come to terms with the idea that students didn’t care about their beautifully designed jigsaw activity about the federal reserve bank?

The course meets once a week for two hours and is guided by a single prompt and set of activities. Each week students are to produce a piece of writing that centers one and only one “moment” in their classroom life for the week. The assignment is as follows:

Once a week I am asking that you pay particular attention to an instance, situation, student, relationship, tension, frustration, success, failure, embarrassment, confusion, or anything along these lines and then write about it. One way to think about what would be a good “thing” would be to choose a thing that causes you to react strongly in some way or another. *As soon as possible after this happens* you are to write about the event (or situation, or whatever “it” is). You should include as much detail as possible. What happened? Who was involved? What was said? What did you feel as it was happening? The idea is to write about what is seen *and* felt, and to do so without interpretation. The length of such a write-up could vary quite a bit, but we need sufficient material to discuss. We will begin with a minimum of 500 words.

This is not meant to be an end-of-the-week “journal.” The idea is to write about something that has impressed you, activated you, tripped you up, made you feel great, made you feel terrible, or otherwise stands out as noteworthy. Noteworthy doesn’t mean extraordinary. Rather, you may notice something completely ordinary and wonder about it. This is also fine.

Each week, we discuss two students’ writing. I choose them both, and while students know that their writing will be the focus at some point, I do not let them know beforehand when their weekly observation will be read. I have that student read their writing out loud while the rest of the students follow along with a pen or pencil in hand. I give directions for students reading along to underline or mark phrases or words that jump out at them.

Associative Objects – Evoking the Dreamwork

The next step I take is to get a list of words that will work as the associative material for us to discuss. Often, the direction I give is for students to “Look at the things you’ve underlined and then write 10 words that come to mind.” This is the practice of transforming the students’ observations/descriptive writing into an associative object, producing the evocative object for the

remainder of that hour. Then, to move to the class toward conversation, I ask them to tell me one of those words to write on the board. I get at least one word from each student in the class.

At this point, we have a range of words on the board. Sometimes they are directly related to the explicit content of the observation writing. Other times, though, they are less obvious, having strayed away from the manifest content of the observation. In this way, it mimics the dreamwork in that these words foster further psychological work of making sense of felt impressions made available, through language, for exploration. The rest of the workgroup discussion goes like this. I ask, “Who wants to nominate one of the words on the board to talk about?” (It can’t be the one they wrote). They nominate it, and I ask them why they chose that one, and then the conversation follows from that students’ comments on that word. The manner of my facilitation is mostly for clarification and then asking what else might come to mind when students think about that particular word or phrase. I invite them to think about that word in relationship to the particular writing that was read, their own experiences in classrooms, and any other association that they have. When the conversation seems to slow, I ask for another word. We talk for an hour about those words and how the students are making sense of them. At the end of the hour, I ask the author of that writing to share about their experience and their thoughts about the discussion. That is all we do, all semester long.

In this way, students are invited to communicate associatively, as they attend to their thoughts and emotions, through thinking and talking about these words or phrases. Students are communicating with thoughts and associations as they emerge rather than toward a particular knowledge goal—or argument. The prompts, in this way of thinking, invite me as the facilitator to think of what students then say as a complex nexus of inferences, assumptions, and emotional conditions to be expressed and make “visible” the dream-thought. I’ll illustrate this process below.

Observation Seminar – Two Examples

At the beginning of the course, students find it very difficult to observe and not interpret. The difficulty is exemplified in a variety of ways. For instance, in one case, a student wrote about a breakthrough they had in relation to their expectations of 9th graders.

In the class we are broken up with three students in all of our groups. I have felt quite lucky because I can see how much all of the students in my group have a passion to learn and are always questioning things and giving a perspective that is well beyond their ninth-grade years especially noticed this in my group with a student by the name of AJ.

In this bit of writing, I notice how much experience and meaning are collapsed. It seems that there is something grandiose about how this student-teacher describes their students. The writing begins with a feeling statement, that of feeling “lucky.” The student-teacher reports on why they feel this way in seeing a “passion to learn” in that the students are “giving perspectives” that are “beyond their ninth-grade years.”

The intervention that the method of the working group provides comes in the form of the following questions: What are the things that you are observing that make you interpret it as a “passion to learn”? What are your expectations of their ninth-grade years, where do those come from, and what are the perspectives that they are offering? How are they being offered? What are they saying? How are they “beyond”? I ask students these questions slowly in our discussions. I

try not to offer the questions as indictments, but rather as curiosities about where our stories about students and who they are come from. We work toward just writing observations that attend to what is observed. It's a process. I get frequent emails in the first parts of semesters asking about whether what they have written is good enough. The students worry: "Is this too much interpretation?" As the semester goes on, the work continues. Some weeks some students write what I experience as beautiful, poetic, writing in their observations that include what they are seeing as well as their noticing of their own emotional reactions to them. Other weeks, that same student will write below the given word minimums in writing that to me feels much more flat. I consider both kinds of writing as part of the same project, trying not to value one as "higher" and the other "lower," trying to recognize that the emotional situation of learning to teach can sometimes feel rather flat and at other times more exhilarating. In both cases, I give them their "points" on the assignment.

In contrast to the above example, I'll present another example from one of the student teacher's observation papers in which a fleeting interaction is described between the student-teacher, a white male, and a student, an African American female. The student-teacher begins the observation by describing trying out a teaching strategy he had learned from one of his professors: to try standing outside of the door and greeting each student by name as they walk in. While many of the students walk in and ignore him, one student stops.

She looked right at me and said, "I didn't know you wore glasses." This was a fair statement, I responded to her, "I try to use contacts most of the time, but I woke up (Wednesday) this morning with my eyes too sore to put my contacts in."

[The Student] returned "Oh that's cool, I broke my glasses last weekend, and I have to wait to go see my grandma to get new ones." I removed my glasses and pointed to the hinge, "I have broken these three different times, but I just keep super gluing them back." She laughed as I showed her the area that has obviously been broken and repaired several times. Her desk is in the front row, and I turned to the board and revealed that I could not read even the biggest letters without my glasses. "Dang your vision is bad!" We laughed as the teacher entered the class from the hallway to get the starter going.

I see in the above writing an observation that is restrained in its interpretation, as the student-teacher recounts a conversation but provides several associative objects that could be words for further commenting. In this way, the observation writing becomes a grounding element for work that mirrors how dream elements function in psychoanalysis. For instance, I would pick out the words glasses, glue, broken, repair, vision, teacher entered, and hinge as words that I could ask students to associate with their experiences of learning to teach. In this method, there is an invitation to think of their time in classrooms in much more loosely connected and more literary ways than is their typical experience.

As Rustin (2008) wrote about observations,

The details are to be observed, not selected so as to give weight to a particular line of thinking. The aim is to strive for a relatively theory-free and non-judgmental attitude to everyone involved, including oneself. The apparently meaningless is just as valuable in the record as the probably or obviously significant. The debt to the free-association method within psychoanalysis is an obvious one. (n.p.)

In the above excerpt, I see the observation as following those suggestions and I see the elements for further free association as being evocative in their own right.

The student teacher's observation writing continues:

I feel like sometimes I try too hard to find the common ground with students. I know it exists, and I want to find it and use it to deepen my connection with the students. But sometimes I get lost in the process of sorting what is common and uncommon, to the point that I'm not practicing presence with the conversation that is going on. It's rude as shit. And it's a weakness that I combat frequently. It is hard for me to connect to people, and yet I felt a connection over a conversation about glasses? As a teacher I feel like I am on guard, always making sure that I am presenting myself in a "teachery-way." And I feel like [the student] cut thru the veil and saw the real me ... and it was okay.

In the writing above, the student-teacher is representing their experience of getting lost, defensiveness, and vulnerability. What I think is being communicated here is like the reporting of a dream. The student's writing follows an associative path around connections sought, lost, and found. The two physical objects that are present in this writing excerpt are glasses and a veil; both objects revolving around the desire to bring ineffable affective life into focus and then an object that frustrates that desire. It is, in this sense, a kind of dream-thought in that it allows for an emotionally laden working and re-working toward significance. The glasses, the broken glasses, the hinges, the comparison of what each party can see, the humor of what it looks like to see through the teacher's eyes, "dang your vision is bad," and then the student-teacher's writing that he *knows* his vision is bad, he's straining to see something that is right in front of him, and eventually he was "seen" in reality. After class, I suggested something like that to this student. He told me that it hit too close to home.

Ogden (2017) called dream thinking "our richest form of thinking" (p. 3) in which multiple planes of representing experience are occurring simultaneously, ranging in vantage points of perspective, timeframe, fantasy, and reality. It seems as though in the example above that this process could be said to be evidence. However, Ogden also cautioned that dream thought is "stifled ... by the analyst's premature need" to offer interpretations and meanings (p. 3). What this indicates in a pedagogical sense is complicated by the distance and difference between the project of analytic practice and that of the teacher. However, I feel confident that in asking the student further questions about his writing, and taking the liberty of making such literary interpretations of it, I provoked a kind of stifling.

In other words, I had to confront what happens in teaching when a thought goes too far, when an interpretation hits "too close to home." On this occasion, I recall feeling like I needed to wait and see how the student in my class returned. I wanted to follow up outside of class and check in and make sure the student was "ok." However, I did not. I tried my best to resist my own desire for a settled meaning, hopefully, that the student was not upset. This is to say that my psychical processes are, of course, activated throughout but are complicated most energetically when my statement comes back at me with suspicion. The work of conducting the workgroup seminar in the way that I have been trying it feels risky. It feels as though I constantly fail at "giving" pre-service teachers an education that they ask for, yet a competing excitement arrives when students acknowledge (either through an enlivened class session or through explicit feedback) that their experience of the course is one of feeling it was somehow helpful.

The Dreamwork of Teacher Education

From the adjacent field of medical training, Marcus (2003) wrote that professional training to be a doctor

exposes students' feelings about themselves and reveals an inadequacy, perhaps pictured as a defect, which is tender, painful and mortifying. The inadequacy is felt perhaps in comparison to the hero-healer fantasy about power for complete and total cure of even the very ill. (p. 375)

In interpreting the above pieces of writing, I see such a similar operation about the kinds of things being exposed to this student-teacher and happening in the spaces of teacher education. Rather than the hero-healer fantasy for complete and total cure, we have the fantasy of "authentic connection" with students that will facilitate powerful and transformative pedagogies. It isn't that transformative experiences are unrelated to pedagogy; it is the internalization of the grandiosity of those transformations that I suspect has something to do with the difficulties of learning to teach. And in my view, what the observation does, through writing and discussions like the one I just read above, is to provide a leverage point to slow the train of thought and let student-teachers sit in the emotional discomfort of learning to teach.

Returning to the psychoanalytic clinic, Ogden (2017) suggested that patient and analyst are:

engaged in a process in which the analyst contributes to the patient's development of the capacity to dream (to do unconscious psychological work) his disturbing emotional experiences that the patient is unable to handle on his own. (p. 6)

When thinking about learning to teach and in light of the observation seminar, Ogden's writing invites a consideration of progress in terms of the development of a "capacity to dream" difficult emotional material. The purpose here is "not the solution to a puzzle; it is the beginning of a creative act in its own right" (Ogden, 2008, p. 10). My thinking about learning to teach is heavily influenced by this sentiment. There are, to be sure, some kinds of procedural knowledge that can be accessed and studied in the service of the development of the professional practice of being a teacher. However, there are just as many aspects of learning to teach that are in the domain of "creative acts," those that necessitate the recognition of our students' psychological realities and our own (Britzman, 2006).

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Our Ancestors' Wildest Dreams (Re)membering the Freedom Dreams of Black Women Abolitionist Teachers

AMBER M. NEAL
DAMARIS C. DUNN
University of Georgia

MUCH OF THE HISTORY OF ABOLITIONISM is written about the efforts of religious, Northern, philanthropic whites to eradicate slavery. The picture of an abolitionist usually calls to mind white men and women advocating on behalf of the enslaved; however, revolutionary African-Americans prompted much of the effort and were early anti-slavery agitators (Quarles, 1969; Sinha, 2016). Furthermore, Black women abolitionists, many of whom were teachers, played an undeniably significant role in the shaping of the movement. Black women teachers' personification of abolition was not singularly about the eradication of the transatlantic slave trade, chattel slavery, or slavery's afterlives (Hartman, 2007), but about bringing the humanity of Black people into fuller view. These women conjured revolutionary dreams of freedom—the life force that animated their motivations for teaching, pedagogies, and sociopolitical activism. These visionary teachers radically imagined a New World outside of what their existing condition prescribed. By utilizing education as a primary tool for their resistance, teaching was an abolitionist activity, in slavery *and* freedom. Love (2019) posited that abolitionist teaching is built on the radical imagination, cultural modes of expression, freedom dreams, visionary thinking—and other methods of abolitionists—to eradicate and fight for injustice, inside and outside of schools.

This chapter reframes the limited, historical understandings of abolition as being synonymous with androcentric, overt, and violent resistance in order to privilege the rooted, spiritual, and imaginative interior sources of Black women teachers' abolitionist ethos. As such, we look to the wisdom of Black women abolitionist teachers throughout history for guidance; first, by placing their struggles for educational freedom within a historical context; and second, by intentionally (re)membering (Dillard, 2012) and recalling their freedom dreams (Kelley, 2002) for education. Inspired, we offer our own freedom dreams as a way to connect the thread between the past, present, and future of teacher education. Finally, this chapter serves as a call to conscious and action for education researchers, practitioners, and teacher educators to realize their own dreams for the educational freedom of all students.

Conceptualizing Freedom Dreams

In Robin D. G. Kelley's (2002) seminal work *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, he defined freedom dreams as the visions of the future that motivate activists in various social, cultural, and political movements. He elucidated the power and centrality of dreaming within all challenges to hegemony, antiblackness, and injustice. Kelley argued that dreams are central to the fight for justice and freedom and that, without new visions, we risk singular focus on deconstruction, rather than reconstruction. More clearly, freedom dreams not only provide a critical analysis and understanding of present-day injustice, but offer liberatory space to imagine a world once injustices are eradicated and our full humanity realized. Kelley (2002) stated,

Any revolution must begin with thought, with how we imagine a New World, with how we reconstruct our social and individual relationships, with unleashing our desire and unfolding a new future on the basis of love and creativity rather than rationality. (p.193)

He suggested that many historic, radical social movements had clear visions of what they were up against, fighting for, and dreaming of. He shed light on this historic reality by reminding us of the individual and collective visions, hopes, and imaginations that brought about radical movements during the last four hundred years. In one chapter, Kelley explored the particular ways in which Black women have dared to envision alternatives to their reality and concludes that they actually led the charge for social change.

The Freedom Dreams of Black Women

Black women have been dreaming of freedom and carving out spaces for liberation since we arrived on these shores (Cooper, 2018). Historically and contemporarily, we have used dreaming as a way to escape interlocking oppressions often rooted in white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy. Black women dreamt our way through The Middle Passage, chattel slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim (and Jane) Crow legislation, segregated schools, sexism, unemployment, and police brutality. In modern times, Black women continue to conjure dreams of what it might look, be, and feel like for *all* Black lives to matter (Khan-Cullors et al., 2017). Revolutionary Black women, like those in the Combahee River Collective highlighted the intersectional oppressions among Black women yet sought the abolition of oppressive systems for the freedom of *all* people (Taylor, 2017). Black women have always embodied a Black radical imagination, producing a vision of liberation expansive enough for all people (Kelley, 2002). As such, their freedom dreams are indispensable as they offer a pathway toward liberation for all.

Freedom dreaming as the conceptual framework for this chapter allows us to explore the alternative visions and articulations of hope among Black women abolitionist teachers whose willingness to dream other worlds inspire modern renderings. The centrality of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) in Black women's work opens necessary discourse among educators about the ways that schools and classrooms can create conditions for students to bring their full selves to school. It is from a place of intersectionality, where humanity and wholeness are central, that all students are able to thrive and not simply survive (Love, 2019). Therefore, we (re)member the freedom dreams of Black women abolitionist teachers and glean from their well of brilliance,

wisdom, and joy to inform new generations of teachers and teacher educators to persist in the struggle for change and dream up an education that is equitable and just.

Necessitating Freedom Dreams for Today's Educational Climate

In the last several decades, the field of teacher education has experienced significant shifts with special initiatives to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion. Initiatives include increased efforts for a more racially and ethnically diverse teaching force by recruiting and retaining teachers of color (Griffin & Tackie, 2016). It also includes the development of culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1995), culturally responsive (Gay, 2010), and cultural sustaining (Paris, 2012) pedagogies. Critical race theory (CRT) has been conceptualized as an effective analytic tool to deconstruct the ways in which race and racism implicitly and explicitly impact the social structures, practices, and discourses in schools (Tate, 1997; Yosso, 2005). Professional development programs have been developed to empower educators to create supportive learning environments for queer students (Payne & Smith, 2011). We asked and attempted to answer what constitutes good teaching of Black students, how we can support new and veteran teachers, and how to reconnect schools to communities of color. We endeavored to transform teacher education as a result of new technologies, shifting political terrains, and emerging social movements.

Yet, contemporary education research continues to document the adverse experiences of Black students in schools. Black students continue to be disproportionately represented in school suspensions (Skiba et al., 2002) and special education yet underrepresented in gifted and advanced placement courses (Harry et al., 2005). Schools serving predominantly students of color enact the school-to-prison nexus by employing more police officers than social workers, community activists, and psychologists (Meiners, 2011). Despite serving the same number of students, school districts with a majority of students of color received approximately \$23 billion less in funding than mostly white school districts in 2016 (edbuild, 2019). Schools enact curriculum violence (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2010) in their deliberate manipulation of academic programming that exclusively teaches a one-sided narrative of Black people as slaves, rather than showcasing their historical brilliance, resilience, and determination. Black teachers, though relatively small in number, find themselves preparing Black students to deal with injustice outside of school and providing students the tools to navigate the racism they experience *within* school spaces (Duncan, 2019). Schools continue to be steeped in whiteness and white supremacy, compromising the intellectual and psychological well-being of learners (Ighodaro & Wiggan, 2010). Essentially, schools are gradually murdering the spirits (Williams, 1991) of Black students by perpetuating injustice and serving as sites of racialized trauma.

As the African-American community contends with the ubiquitous nature of antiblackness, inside and outside of schools, simultaneously, they have been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The economic, social, emotional, and educational impacts of a fatal, global pandemic has reverberated within the Black community. It has also illuminated centuries of educational inequity as school districts across the nation now face the demands of remote learning, social distancing mandates, food services, and ensuring that the social-emotional needs of students are met. Our current educational climate necessitates a wide range of methodological, pedagogical, theoretical, epistemological, and historical perspectives to support those students who have been least well supported in our society and in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

The field of teacher education must contend with where it presently stands and where it wants to go. Freedom dreaming is exactly what these conditions call for, as it takes inventory of the complexity, urgency, and unprecedented nature of our present moment and dares us to dream the future anew. We turn to the wisdom of Black women who, throughout time, leveraged their educational practice as social activism and committed to seeing Black children afforded better futures. A radical tradition persists among Black women teachers being at the forefront of making education inclusive for all children, leaving us a roadmap for social change and educational justice (Muhammad et al., 2020). We look to their freedom dreams.

The Freedom Dreams of Historic Black Women Abolitionist Teachers

History recounts the struggles on the part of African-Americans to gain equal access to quality education in the United States. During the era of slavery, the education of African Americans, both enslaved and free, was often discouraged and eventually made illegal in many of the Southern states following slave insurrections (Aptheker, 1937). Fearing that literacy would prove a great threat to the financially lucrative slave system, whites in the Deep South passed strict laws, otherwise known as slave codes, forbidding enslaved people from learning to read or write and making it a crime for others to teach them (Rasmussen, 2010). Fears also included the spread of abolitionist materials, additional slave insurrections, and the ability to forge freedom papers and slave passes. These laws effectively placed restrictions on enslaved people's ability to communicate with one another, travel, and learn (Albanese, 1976). The penalties for enslaved people caught reading or writing were severe. Common punishment included dozens of lashes, jail time, amputation, and even death (Cornelius, 1983). These public demonstrations served as methods of deterrence to stifle any desire for education among enslaved people.

Lily Ann Granderson

Despite the inherent risks, both free and enslaved African Americans continued to learn to read and write, often as a result of the clandestine efforts of Black women. Davis (1983) detailed the efforts of one Black woman teacher.

Resistance was often more subtle than revolts, escapes and sabotage. It involved, for example, the clandestine acquisition of reading and writing skills and the imparting of this knowledge to others ... a slave woman ran a "midnight school", teaching her people between the hours of eleven and two until she had "graduated" hundreds. (p. 22)

The woman described here was Lily Ann Granderson, an enslaved woman who used the literacy skills acquired from her master's children to establish a clandestine night school for enslaved children (Haviland, 1882). She taught twelve children at a time, and when she imparted in them all the knowledge she knew, she graduated them. Granderson successfully operated her clandestine school for about seven years without being discovered. However, word soon leaked about her illegal class sessions. Although the law prohibited whites from educating slaves, she found no clause regarding an enslaved person educating other enslaved people. As a result, she opened a

Sabbath school in addition to her midnight school. Granderson grew to prominence as a result of her educational influence on hundreds during her lifetime (Hine & Thompson, 1998).

Although archival sources about the life of Lily Ann Granderson remain limited in scope, creative speculation allows us to read, interpret, and imagine her motivations and movements. It is clear, however, that Granderson envisioned education, and the paths it opened, as being worth the danger and risks. Granderson's determination to improve the lives of enslaved people through literacy is a testament to the dream of freedom and the hope for a better future she personified. She must have dreamed of Black people exercising social and political power, reading abolitionist materials, and leveraging their literacy skills to free themselves, which her students later did (Hine & Thompson, 1998). She must have dreamed of her students as adults, fully armed with literacy skills, equipping future generations with this powerful ammunition. She must have dreamed of Black children growing up to be productive U.S. citizens who led radical social movements. Granderson's practices of refusal, resistance, and agitation embody a freedom dream of education as a path toward liberation.

Mary Smith Peake

Mary Smith Peake was born free in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1823. At a young age, she was sent to live with her aunt in Alexandria, where she attended a school for African Americans (Lockwood, 1862). However, after ten years, her schooling was interrupted when the United States Congress enacted a law that ceased education for free Blacks in the state (Butchart, 1996; Taylor, 2005). As a result, all schools for free Black people were closed, and education for enslaved Black people was outlawed. Despite the pause in Peake's education, she maintained a love for learning and developed a love for teaching. After relocating with her family to Hampton, Virginia, her teaching career began. Like Granderson, Peake secretly taught enslaved and free Blacks to read and write in her home, despite it being forbidden by law (Taylor, 2005). Lerner (1972) offered an explanation for why Peake took the risk of teaching Black people. He stated, "In the Negro's long struggle for survival, education was always a foremost goal, both as a tool for advancement and acceptance in the general society and as a means of uplifting and improving life in the Black community" (p. 75).

Early in the Civil War, the Peake home was destroyed when Confederate forces torched Hampton (Lockwood, 1862). Blacks worked tirelessly to rebuild the community, including fishing, gardening, farming, and construction work (Lockwood, 1969). Soon thereafter, Peake was requested to resume her teaching by adults and children, alike (Taylor, 2005). In 1861, under the shade of a large oak tree, Peake continued her teaching practice (National Park Service, 2020). The thirst for knowledge was evident as enrollment grew exponentially over the course of several days (Lockwood, 1969). The American Missionary Association (AMA) eventually hired Peake as their first Black educator and provided a cottage for her school (Taylor, 2005). Even as her health deteriorated, as a result of tuberculosis, Peake remained steadfast in her devotion to teaching freed children and adults. Rev. Lewis C. Lockwood (1862), a missionary commissioned to the area by the AMA described her resolve,

She exhibited a martyr spirit, of the true type. Often when she was confined to her bed, her pupils would be found around her, drawing knowledge as if it were from her very life. Again and again did Dr. Browne, brigade surgeon, who concerned himself for her like a

brother, advised her to consider her weakness, and intermit her exhausting duties. The scene of these labors was the Brown Cottage, near the seminary, fronting on Hampton Roads. The school room was the front room, first story. Her own family apartment was the front room, second story. It will ever be a place about which precious memories will linger. (pp. 34–35)

Lockwood's assessment of Peake clearly shows her persistence and commitment to the education of Black people; it likewise demonstrates the freedom dream she embodied. Her refusal to stop, creativity, and radical love for Black people is yet another example of Black women abolitionist teachers' ability to move beyond what legal, social, and political conditions dictate to create space for liberation.

Charlotte Forten

Mary Peake's commitment to the education of enslaved and free Black people inspired other Black women abolitionist teachers, including Charlotte Forten. Forten was born in Philadelphia into a prominent, wealthy, and free Black family with a strong legacy of abolitionist activities. As a child, she often witnessed fugitive slaves given refuge at her grandfather's home, in addition to numerous lively discussions and debates around abolition (Taylor, 2005). At 16, when the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 threatened the freedom of escaped slaves and free Blacks, Forten was sent to Salem, Massachusetts, to attend a private school where she was the sole African American student (Billington, 1953). Continuing her family's tradition of abolitionist work, she soon joined the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society and became acquainted with many of the leading Black and white abolitionists of the time. Shortly after arriving in Salem, in 1854, she began a diary, which she maintained for a decade, offering a rare first-hand account of a free Black woman during the antebellum era. It likewise illustrates her freedom dream for education. On September 12th, 1855, Forten wrote,

Let us labor earnestly and faithfully to acquire knowledge, to break down the barriers of prejudice and oppression. Let us take courage; never ceasing to work—hoping and believing that if not for us, for another generation there is a better, brighter day in store—when slavery and prejudice shall vanish before the glorious light of Liberty and Truth; when the rights of every colored man shall everywhere be acknowledged and respected. (Taylor, 2005, p.132)

After graduating in 1856, she began her teaching career in Salem schools as the first Black teacher hired to teach white students in the state of Massachusetts (Taylor, 2005). After two years, however, she resigned due to failing health and returned to her family home in Philadelphia. Throughout her recovery, she wrote poetry, much of which detailed abolitionism and anti-slavery activism. In 1862, she was back in the classroom, this time, in the South, teaching formerly enslaved Black people on St. Helena Island, South Carolina (Billington, 1961). She chronicled this experience in two articles published in the May and June 1864 issues of the *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "Life on the Sea Islands." In describing her experiences teaching Black children, she stated,

I never before saw children so eager to learn, although I had had several years' experience in New-England schools. Coming to school is a constant delight and recreation to them. They come here as other children go to play. The older ones, during the summer, work in the fields from early morning until eleven or twelve o'clock, and then come into school, after their hard toil in the hot sun, as bright and anxious to learn as ever. . . . The majority learn with wonderful rapidity. Many of the grown people are desirous of learning to read. It is wonderful how a people who have been so long crushed to the earth, so imbruted as these have been,—and they are said to be among the most degraded negroes of the South—can have so great a desire for knowledge, and such a capability for attaining it. (Forten, 1864, pp. 591–592)

Forten refused the racist stereotype of Black people as inherently unlearned and inferior. She saw the beauty of her students, thought of them as fully capable of learning, and held high expectations for them. Her lessons not only provided students with fundamental literacy skills, but instilled in them a strong sense of racial pride. In her entry on November 13th, 1862, she described one of her lessons.

Talked to the children a little while to-day about the noble Toussaint [L'Ouverture]. They listened very attentively. It is well that they should know what one of their own color could do for his race. I long to inspire them with courage and ambition (of a noble sort), and high purpose. (Turkel, 2009, p. 63)

Forten's freedom dream was not only about changing the perception of Black people among whites, but centered on Black people seeing themselves as inherently brilliant, worthy, and capable of wondrous things. Above all, her life was wholly dedicated to justice and liberation.

The stories of Lily Ann Granderson, Mary Peake, Charlotte Forten, and thousands of other Black women abolitionist teachers are filled with determination, commitment, love, refusal, and self-sacrifice. They embody a visionary politic, subversive pedagogy, and radical imaginary that dared to dream the impossible. They envisioned schools as being revolutionary sites and used their classrooms as spaces to humanize Black bodies and minds. In remembering her early school experience, hooks (1994) professed,

For black folks teaching—educating—was fundamentally political because it was rooted in anti-racist struggle. Indeed, my all-black grade schools became the location where I experienced learning as revolution. Almost all our teachers at Booker T. Washington were black women. They were committed to nurturing intellect so that we could become scholars, thinkers, and cultural workers—black folks who used our “minds.” We learned early on that our devotion to learning, to a life of the mind, was a counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization. (p. 2)

Not only did Black women place infinite value on the power and progress of education, but they dreamed up, developed, and implemented elaborate plans of action to obtain it (Williams, 2005). The education they provided was directly tied to collective liberation with teaching strategies rooted in the mental, physical, and spiritual welfare of Black people. Their stories exemplify Love's (2019) assertion that abolitionist teaching is not a way to teach, but a way of life.

Our Ancestors' Wildest Dreams: Contemporary Freedom Dreams

In what follows, we offer our own freedom dreams order to connect the thread between the past, present, and future of teacher education, in the belief that teachers must commit to a dream of education that is sound in theory and abolitionist praxis.

Damaris' Freedom Dream – Black Girl Poetic Joy as Protest

Black girl
age fourteen, 5'5", with deep brown eyes,
head full of kinky curls, adorned with a flower crown.
Representing and signifying
the thirty-four Black girls,
gone.
Missing.

Black girl
age fourteen, 5'5", with deep brown eyes,
poet at the Schomburg Center.
Seeing herself in Shaniya Boyd,
hypervisible, yet invisible.
No public outcry, no adequate news coverage.
Saddened and enraged, she asks
"When will America see me?"

Black girl
age fourteen, 5'5", with deep brown eyes,
reciting protest poetry about the neglect of
America's Black girls.
Fully aware that the white girlhood
of her classmates
won't ever protect her,
or make room for her,
Black girl.

Black girl
age fourteen, 5'5", with deep brown eyes,
successfully putting the specialized high school test behind her,
now determined to enroll into that which is specialized
schooling.
Her choice,
her choosing.
A small chance
of being saved,
of being seen.
Brilliant Black girl.

Black girl
age fourteen, 5'5", with deep brown eyes,
whose Black mother is
adamant about education,
with the hope that her own daughter
will not go missing.
Yet, fully conscious that education alone,
will not save her
from the violence that often awaits
Black girl turned Black woman.

Black girl
age fourteen, 5'5", with deep brown eyes.
Not lost, found
her voice on the very stage
that Maya and Toni recited prose and poetry,
in the Langston Hughes auditorium.
Protesting with voice and pen.
Etching Black girls into herstory,
determined to make Black girls visible,
in all their glory.
Beaming, radiant, joyous.
Black girl, being.

As I watched the country mourn for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor's murderers remained unapprehended. Reflecting, I recalled the lack of public outrage for the thirty-four Black girls who went missing in the District of Columbia in 2017. My Black girl scholars at the Schomburg Center for Research and Black Culture, in New York, wrote and recited poems about the missing girls. Their memorials served as a daunting reminder of America's legacy of violence against the bodies, minds, and spirits of Black girls and women and how their lives are often disregarded. Having co-taught spoken word for four years at the Schomburg Center, I penned the above poem as a way to acknowledge the multiplicity of ways in which abolitionist teachers, of the past and present, communicate their lived experiences. Charlotte Forten was a poet, as was abolitionist teacher Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. Hartman (2020) argued that Black feminist poetics is a plan for abolition, while Black feminist poet and writer, Audre Lorde (1984) professed,

Poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. (p. 37)

Accordingly, I use this art form to dream, hope, and desire. When I say, "beaming, radiant, joyous", these are my hopes for Black girls; "etching Black girls into herstory" as my freedom dream; and "When will America see me?" is the call for dominant culture to fully realize the humanity of Black girls.

In schools, Black girls are used to pain—the pain of being pushed out (Morris, 2016), unseen, unheard, unprotected, and misunderstood. In South Carolina, school resource officer Ben

Fields tossed a Black girl from her desk then dragged her across the classroom floor for refusing to surrender her cellular phone (Ortiz & Melvin, 2015). In upstate New York, school administrators stripped four middle school Black girls of their clothing under suspicions of being under the influence of drugs (Griffith, 2019). In Boston, an elementary school apologized for having a Black girl play the role of an enslaved person (Mikkelsen, 2017). The oppression of Black girls is ever present in the very spaces that should keep them safe. In comparison to their white counterparts, Black girls are six times more likely to receive out of school suspension, three times more likely to be court involved, and make up 20% of those detained (Crenshaw et al., 2015). Because Black girls are amongst the most vulnerable, teachers and teacher educators must commit to their safety and well-being in schools and actively resist the normalization of Black girl pain, hypersexualization, criminalization, and marginalization. Though joy has been theorized across disciplines, it has only recently made its way to education (Love, 2019). What would happen, then, if teachers began to share in the communal responsibility of Black girl joy in school spaces? What if we raised questions of pedagogy and epistemology as it relates to Black girl joy? How can it be embodied in school spaces?

The Black girl joy I freedom dream about can be found in Black women and girls' poetry, literature, and visual artistry; in the movement of our bodies when we hear a new hip-hop track; the way we wear our hair; and the way we dress to express our identities. The Black girl joy I freedom dream about is riddled with anti-racist therapy interventions for educators (Love, 2020), field trips that center our experiences, and pedagogies that honor the multiplicity of our ways of being and knowing. The freedom dream I conceive means that Black girls are no longer at war with an educational system that, for centuries, has been committed to erasing our herstories, showing us that we are not welcome, typecasting our literacies as ghetto or inarticulate, and policing our voices and bodies. My freedom dream for Black girls is not steeped in performative allyship because it's popular to be socially conscious but rooted in a soul-stirring resolve to dismantle systems that chronically murder the spirits of Black girls. My freedom dream includes educators who look like us, nurture our growth, and create space for sisterhood to take shape. This Black woman abolitionist educator's freedom dream is seeing Breonna Taylor, Sandra Bland, Aiyana Jones, Tanisha Anderson, and Rekia Boyd alive and thriving. I dream of Black girls, being. Joy.

Amber's Freedom Dream – Hope to Break the Spirit

It was a blazing, hot summer day in July 2013, two months after I moved to Houston, Texas, and one month until I embarked on my new career as a 5th grade teacher. I sat by the pool, feet dangling, water splashing, music blasting, conversing with friends about the happenings of the world. Though this wasn't normal conversation for the celebration of a birthday, everyone was in anticipation of the verdict. I reassured my friends that there were mothers on the jury, and despite their race, assuredly, they would see Trayvon Martin as a teenager, a child essentially. After a few more laughs and a squelched argument, a hush fell around the pool as my friends and I eagerly awaited the announcement. Time seemed to move in slow-motion, as the words “n o t g u i l t y” poured from the juror's mouth. As I perused the area, I noticed mouths moving but couldn't quite make out the words. All I remember are the faces; the faces of disbelief, rage, and weariness. As I gathered myself into one piece, slowly rising to my feet, I staggered into the restroom where I wept. I travailed for Trayvon and interceded for his mother, his family, his classmates, and the

Black community. How could they allow someone to murder a child, with impunity? He was somebody's child. He was *our* child. The not-guilty verdict broke something in my spirit with the realization that even our children weren't safe. This breaking of the spirit wasn't in reference to the destruction of self-esteem, joy, or hope, as in the traditional sense, but a transformational shift in my thinking as a Black woman teacher. It ignited a fiery sense of urgency that fueled many Black women abolitionist teachers before me. It likewise necessitated a radical dream for the freedom of Black children.

Prior to Trayvon Martin's murder, I was indoctrinated in grit, resilience, "no excuses", growth mindsets, and other "educational gimmicks" (Love, 2019). I was inundated with advice from veteran teachers to build relationships with students, not for the sake of community building, but so students would want to please me and perform well on state-sponsored normative assessments. I was taught to follow the strict curriculum provided by the district and not deviate from its plan. I was taught to disregard the social, familial, and spiritual conditions of Black students, but how could I when my professional background prior to teaching was *soulcial* work? I spent the remainder of the summer dreaming, looking toward the future, and envisioning what I wanted my classroom, community, pedagogies, and relationships with students and families to be like, feel, sound, and look like once school began.

hooks (2003) talked about hopelessness as being the core of dominator culture. It is a tool to maintain the ideologies of imperialist whitesupremacistcapitalistpatriarchy, which normalizes violence and makes citizens believe that peace, humanity, and freedom is not possible. She suggested, "When despair prevails, we cannot create life sustaining communities of resistance. ... Our visions for tomorrow are most vital when they emerge from the concrete circumstances of change we are experiencing right now" (p.12). Hope causes a radical breaking of the spirit, where cynicism, realism, and sarcasm dissipates. It snaps you out of reality and into something bigger. My freedom dream is centered on my hope for the evidence of things not yet seen: Black children truly being free.

I dream of vibrant buildings draped in cheerful reds, lush greens, and majestic Black. As students and families arrive at school, they are welcomed by ancestors through gospel, jazz, and reggae, symbolizing the start of a bustling day. Classes begin with James Weldon Johnson's affirmation of liberation and a communal greeting that offers appreciation for each person's presence in school, because Ubuntu—I am, because you are (Dillard & Neal, 2020). I dream of a school where Black brilliance is inheritance, joy is unspeakable, laughter is uncontained, and mattering is the minimum. I dream of a radical coalition of abolitionists: teachers, administrators, parents, paraprofessionals, and community leaders willing to sacrifice and lay down their very livelihoods for the wellness of Black children—aware yet unafraid of the risks associated with agitation, disrupting and abolishing unjust systems, inside and outside of schools. I dream of paper burning to ash, "knowledge of the oppressor / I know it hurts to burn / To imagine a time of silence / or few words" (Rich, 1974/2016, pp. 303–304); libraries filled with Afrofuturism, African folklore, poetry, romance, memoirs, mystery, and coming of age tales penned by Black authors; books that represent the African diaspora; books that teach the brutality and inhumanity of enslavement, *and* stories of resistance, uprisings, and rebellion. I dream of pedagogies of the spirit (Dillard et al., 2000; Ryoo et al., 2009;) grounded in nurturing the whole Black child, reclaiming humanity through radical love (hooks, 2000; Moore, 2018), beloved community (King, 1994), and collective care (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002); pedagogies that welcome students to be vulnerable, emptying the heaviness of their hearts and minds, and being filled to the brim. Schools without police, but as many social workers, psychologists, dance instructors, exhorters, and healers as

teachers, who allow the full spectrum of human emotion and bodily experience. I dream of the classroom as a site to strategize, mobilize, and organize; where students develop critical consciousness and sociopolitical awareness inspiring active resistance and social action; where they “read” their worlds through historical lenses; interrogate canonical texts and answer questions of power and privilege; where every academic subject and teacher therein address white supremacy, imperialism, capitalism, racism, and antiblackness, and provide necessary tools to combat their insidious nature. I dream of schools “where Black children, outside the gaze of whiteness and surveillance of white supremacy dream weightless; where Black radical imagination dances wildly into the night—quenching the thirst of yearning and learning, giving birth to becoming” (Dumas & ross, 2016, p. 436). I dream of Black kids, being. Free.

Our Collective Freedom Dream for Contemporary Teacher Education

Contemporary forms of oppression, antiblackness, and white supremacy in schools call for a new network of abolitionist teachers. This contemporary movement is centered on the total eradication of ideologies, systems, policies, practices, and laws that continue to oppress and suppress the advancement of Black, Indigenous, people of color. However, much is required. It requires educators to be critically conscious of the nation’s history of educational inequity and the truth that schools were never created for Black children to thrive. It requires an understanding of the ways that racism is endemic to American society (Bell, 1995), and it requires the self-actualization that teachers have unconsciously, and consciously, perpetuated it. It requires teachers who are willing to place their power, privilege, and positioning on the line to dismantle oppressive structures that murder the spirits of Black children. It requires divestment in seemingly progressive, neoliberal reforms and investment in radically imagining what education will be once those structures are gone. It requires teachers to organize with communities of color and build local and state partnerships. It requires teachers to truly believe that *all* Black lives matter, and as such the well-being, safety, humanity, and liberation of Black children matter. The contemporary abolitionist movement in schools needs teachers who dare to dream of freedom.

It is our belief that the field of teacher education could learn a great deal from historic Black women abolitionist teachers for a more equitable and just vision of teaching and learning. Their approach should be taken up in this moment as they provide a model for an abolitionist ethos and praxis: resolve, creativity, imagination, immediacy, refusal, and liberation, all rooted in radical love. Black women abolitionists like Lily Ann Granderson, Mary Peake, Charlotte Forten, and countless others used their dreams to fuel social, political, and educational movements. The manifestations of their dreams set the stage for us to now radically dream and (re)imagine the future of teacher education. It is our hope that in (re)membering Black women abolitionist teachers, we acknowledge their ongoing, lifelong commitment to liberation and recommit to a vision of teacher education that centers education as a path toward freedom.

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Dreams of the Past

The Work of Dreaming and Historical (un)Consciousness in History Teacher Education

MARK E. HELMSING
George Mason University

History is the most dangerous product evolved from the chemistry of the intellect. ... It causes dreams, it intoxicates whole peoples, gives them false memories, quickens their reflexes, keeps their old wounds open. ... History will justify anything. It teaches precisely nothing, for it contains everything. (Valéry, 1931/1956, p. 114)

The field of history education has spent the better part of the last decade taking on new critical approaches that rethink the assumptions underlying its set of practices. Within this broadly critical turn, a rich vein draws from psychoanalytic and affective concepts (Farley, 2008, 2009, 2010; Garrett, 2011, 2017; Helmsing, 2014; Levy & Sheppard, 2018; Sheppard et al., 2015). The approaches to history education through this vein grapple with both history (lowercase “h”) and History (uppercase “H”) as the affective, psychic, and (in)corporeal substance of the past erupting into the present as well as the disciplinary tactics and strategies (de Certeau, 1980/1984) of the academic performance of History through historiography, anthropology, philosophy, and literary studies of the past.

The distinction between history and History is important to consider for how the two differ and collide when we think about history-as-curriculum. The concept of “history”—with a lowercase “h”—is a diffused concept. When someone has an encounter with orienting their memories, feelings, associations, and reactions to the past, the encounter is with history. Events that occurred in a past time are within the realm of history. People who have lived in the past time (even as recently as one day ago) are within the realm of history. A memory of an embarrassing incident that occurred in one’s childhood is history. The existence of enslaved Africans and African-Americans in the United States in the 1800s is a part of history as is the existence of enslaved persons in the Roman Empire in 100 CE. Although these two groups of enslaved peoples did not overlap in time, their existence is a part of history, and their experience is historical by having once lived in times that are now past.

How is this different from History? The difference resides in disciplinary power. History with a capital H is both a discipline of inquiry (the practice of historians) and, in turn, disciplines

our thought of what it is possible to think and know about the past. In other words, when one tries to put boundaries around history, or a history, it can become a History if it is documented, recorded, or otherwise (con)formed to pre-established expectations of how one is to engage with the past. As a concept within our minds, history is wild, unpredictable, and incapable of being fully captured and disciplined. It is impossible to fully know everything that has happened in the past or to conceive of every person who has lived in the past. In this sense history has a depth that is always out of our reach, but because of this depth, it churns endlessly to fuel human creativity and imagination. Dreams make use of history because there is ample history to consume and fuel acts of dreaming.

How one dreams about history is only, therefore, limited by what is imposed as History. In this sense, History is contingent upon what is selected, contained, and disciplined as the past. History disciplines history, giving it shape, a narrative form, a particular aim, and purpose. To use our example of how the existence of enslaved Africans and African-Americans in the United States are wrenched out of history and into History, we can look at any number of contemporary versions of the History of enslaved persons in nineteenth-century America. All such Histories will produce certain effects, which are intimately tied to how we dream about the past. For example, the 1990 multi-part documentary film, *The Civil War*, by Ken Burns is a History in which histories of enslaved Africans and African-Americans manifest as collective dreams of determination, perseverance, colored by the affective resonance of instrumental music playing hymns and folk songs in the background of the film (Burns, 1990). In contrast, the 2019 digital media platform, *The 1619 Project*, produced by *The New York Times*, is a History in which the histories of enslaved Africans and African-Americans manifest as collective dreams of duress, subjugation, and dehumanization (The 1619 Project, 2019).

As with most disciplinary formations, History often conceals the scenes of its own making. Derrida (1972/1982) explained this process in his example of how History always and only offers a temporary and false security in its claim to fully know the past, shaped by determined historical structures imposed upon the past. Rather than feel deflated or defeated by this consequence of our inability to fully know the past through History, we should, instead, welcome the relief of knowing that a History we construct, be it the History we tell of our childhood or the History of enslavement in the United States, serves particular purposes, purposes that can be constructive, destructive, or perhaps both.

If history is endless and formless, impossible of being fully known and History is a particular shape we give to any given cut or extraction of history, this means history education can diversify the forms through which the past appears when we teach and learn History and, in turn, generate the historical material that constitutes the doing of history education. However, many history educators continue to focus on a presumed “official” History that is transmitted and passed down from history educators for students to inherit as local, (trans)national, and global narratives of the past, derived and written by professionally trained historians, that which Apple (2014) would classify as the “official knowledge” of history education in school textbooks, curriculum standards, and related curriculum texts. It is true that the academic narratives of History are the most ready-at-hand forms of history curriculum for teachers in schools to consume and reproduce in their teaching, but there are numerous other sources for the past that history educators bring with them that exist within them.

Creating awareness of more metaphorical, more imagined forms of pastness that we imagine through our desires has been a powerful motivation in teaching history and social studies educators in university-based teacher education programs over the past several years. This

awareness embodies how I invite history educators to see their relationship to history—both constructed and discursive, felt and embodied—as historically specific orientations to the past and the present in often vernacular, poetic, and metaphorical forms such as myth (Bottici & Challand, 2006); epic (Cornwell, 2015); allegory (Helmsing, 2019; Jenckes, 2002); fantasy (Scott, 2001, 2011); legend (Seigworth, 2011); nostalgia (Zembylas, 2014); haunting (Kleinberg, 2017); romance (Elias, 2005); and fabulation (Bogue, 2010; Helmsing, 2016). These are all distinct yet related forms of calling forth and dreaming up a past with particular affects inflecting our temporal constructions of past, present, and future. These forms shape our desire for a past as well as form *how* we desire the past, longingly through nostalgia, heroically through epic, and obliquely through allegory. If the past is a foreign country (Lowenthal, 2015), then seeing the past through these forms and feelings greatly enlarges the terrain of such a country and allows us to see and travel much further and wider throughout this country than we have traditionally allowed ourselves to traverse through the teaching and learning of history education. With this article, I add another form to this assortment of figuring the past through metaphorical, imaginal figuration and disfiguration: the form of the past as dream. Teaching the past through pedagogical work can, in turn, constitute a form of dreamwork. Adding our dreams of history and our dreamwork to engage with those dreams as an affective and figural mode of relating to the past becomes a “movement which breaks up the lines” of the limits and thresholds of what is possible to think, feel, and understand about the past (Hartog, 2003/2017, p. 18).

Through the concepts of dreams and dreamwork, the past floats into the present, coming in at times like an opaque fog and at other times like a shimmering ray of light. When one says, “I had a dream,” one may mean or wish to say, “I had a vision,” or that one “saw something” in one’s dreams. A dream, a vision, as well as in-sight and premonitions are all closely related terms, so much so that Valtchinova (2009) suggested that any historical or anthropological construction of past experience is one constructed of “visions and apparitions, all the more dreams,” which are “firmly rooted in the cultural codes and imaginaries of local societies” (p. 205). These cultural codes are in part concocted out of “the deep and forbidden meaning of our dreams and fantasies,” which are “turned into the dream stories we have” about history and about the past (Shanks, 1992, p. 28). It is this conception of dreaming that I follow in this article. This is history as an imagined vision one has about the past in the present and the desires operating within the unconscious about a particular past. Thus, dreams, working within history education, help us consider how the present is “always emerging from the past and heading into a future, which the individual projects” through a dream and the act of dreaming and one’s desires that constitute the dream itself (Stewart, 2017, p. 31).

In keeping with how this special issue approaches dreams as idealizations, desires, conflicts, and symbolizations in the course of learning to teach, I describe dreaming about the past within examples from the curriculum of history education. I examine some issues that pertain theoretically to dreaming and the historical unconscious that can open conversations for history educators to have about dreaming and dreamwork. I then examine particular features of how the pre-service history education teacher candidates in my social studies education teaching methods courses reflect on the dreams they have of the Second World War and the implications such dreams may hold for their teaching. I note how history education students bring about dreams of the past to their teaching and how such dreams unfold in the conversations we have about history teaching. Following this, I share examples of when such dreaming is interrupted or disturbed during my students’ clinical teaching experiences in history classrooms. The significance of history educators dreaming, and of the possibility of such dreaming to be interrupted or disturbed, lies in how it can

provoke we as history educators to consider that which is ungraspable about the past yet, nonetheless, supplements what believe we have perceived about the past. Because our perceptions of the past are always partial, inscribed in our minds through the dreamwork of history and disciplined by History, it is important for history educators to know how History is a reconstituted past. Dreamwork invites history educators to move away from History as a reawakened or revealed true and immediate access to the past and, instead, to see how history education as dreamwork can displace and efface certain aspects of History while opening new aspects to reinterpretation. If we take the classic injunction to dream big literally, then we can dream bigger histories in history education instead of the ossified, exhausted, dreams of, say, the Founding Fathers, American exceptionalism, and individualizing liberalism that haunt the dreams of U.S. History curriculum.

Dreams as Desiring the Past in History Education

I first read Freud's (1899/1976) *The Interpretation of Dreams* during a first-year undergraduate seminar. Some twenty years later, I recently picked up Freud's text to find out again what he wrote about dreaming as I worked on this article. What I reencountered during this second reading was Freud's explanation of how dreams operate as a momentary, fleeting pause of the censoring acts of the ego. Much like the mechanical metaphors used to explain dreaming as the rewinding of a video cassette tape (a device which is itself a technology to contain and archive dreams), dreaming allows the unconscious to reassemble wishes, desires, fears, and other psychic feelings. Played back through and as dreamwork, these imaginal desires become accessible in a narrative form, much like history itself (Ogden, 2010). The rewound and repressed psychic material returns to us in dreams in veiled, partial forms. For Freud, and for our purposes in thinking of the desires of history educators, the desire that reroutes into dreams is a type of "energy generated in the boiler room of the *id*, building up pressure and occasionally finding release in dreams, fantasies" and other imaginal forms (Landau, 2017, p. 137).

What I take as significant from my re-engaging with Freud's book is my understanding that the transfer of the psychic, affective material, or residue, into and through dreams is a way of reading the desires that do not always come to the surface of our teaching about the past in history education. The symbols and metaphors that exist in our dreams also exist in our teaching that draws upon dreams. If we conceptualize history education as a kind of dreamwork about the past, then we can see how our desires of, for, and in a particular past create certain affective intensities that drive our teaching about the past. History education as dreamwork means letting the signs, symbols, and metaphors of our dreams take shape and become manifest in any newly emerging awareness of our teaching. Talking, describing, identifying, and naming this content is what I have play out in my teacher education courses. For example, a unit I enjoy exploring with my pre-service teacher candidates is the French Revolution. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the French Revolution is a juxtaposition of revolutionary hope through the potential of revolution and the mutation of this hope into terror that was a resultant risk of the French democratic impulse. In other words, the French Revolution is both a volatile history and a troubling History to learn, which vividly animates dreams of the French Revolution. Secondly, there are many ways in which one dreams of the French Revolution, offering a rich conceptual assortment to play with in class. First, I ask my students to identify and describe mental representations of the French Revolution, which will yield examples such as the guillotine, a crowd screaming at Marie Antoinette, a throng amassing *en route* to storm the Bastille. We consider how these representations are, in one sense,

constructs that seem to give a secure hold onto the history of the French Revolution. They help us grasp the past as it occurred in France in the 1780s. But, going deeper into this dreaming, we consider what these representations perform. What kind of pleasure is derived from looking at illustrations of the guillotine and from imagining the feel of the steel on one's neck for the nanosecond preceding decapitation? When we imagine the guillotine, how does it command our attention and perception, but more importantly, how is the guillotine operating in our imagination? This is a pedagogical attention to the imagined forms of the past that cohere in my students' dreams and how such dreams function. Once the dreams are brought into awareness from the unconscious to a form of historical consciousness we can then act upon the insight of our dreams.

As I will explain later with some examples from my teaching, this is a process of facilitating pedagogical and curricular connections between the content of dreams and the emotional states they help elicit and produce. These emotional states become a way for teachers to travel back and forth and along a road connecting their dream world of a past and the awakened world in which they teach. What I hope to show is a productive outcome for history educators when the work of teacher education casts attention on dreams and dreaming to estrange a history educator's perception of the present and the past and the past-in-the-present that influences the curricular thinking during moments of history education.

Both Marxist and Freudian in orientation, the historical thinking of Benjamin (1927/2002), situated dreaming within a historical plane. For Benjamin, a critically aware historian is a kind of dreamworker who travels within a culture or society that is asleep and critically unaware of its history, a people slumbering through a long sleep in which they are controlled and dominated by the ruling bourgeois class. Benjamin saw dreams as a kind of ideological substance to be awoken through historical knowledge. The critical historian would be able to do so similar to how an awakened society or culture "rubbing its eyes, recognizes precisely this dream *as* a dream" for "it is in this moment that the historian takes upon himself [sic] the task of dream interpretation (emphasis his)" (Benjamin as quoted in in Buck-Morris, 1980, p. 216). There is a shadowy space between a dream state and an awakened state through which the realities of history pass and take shape in how an individual can capture and internalize the past as this dreamlike matter. Coates (2015) described experiencing of a space similar to this, what he calls a "rapture" that "comes only when you can no longer be lied to, when you have rejected the Dream" (p. 116). And yet, as Coates (2015) pointed out, in the United States, the force of History taking shape in dreams such as the pervasive American Dream is strong as "a very large number of Americans will do all they can to preserve the Dream," even going so far as to uphold a version of the nation's history as one collective History, a kind of "sleeping pill that ensures the Dream" (p. 33).

Bringing one's attention to such dream content, and the warring feelings and awakenings can happen when dreams are disturbed, is a vitally important task of any form of critical education, at the heart of all of the various recent formations of critical history education I outlined at the beginning of this article. Caruth (1996) explained this by noting how trauma is not found within a dream itself, "but [in] the experience of waking from it" (p. 64). When History is offered as a space to consider and confront the history animating our dreams, this orients history education towards identifying messages that operate within the dreams, allowing history educators to work with students to identify and establish themes emerging from the dreams, emotional connotations, significant symbols, and insights about how we relate to our past that we may be inclined to act upon, especially when moved to acknowledge what we find alluring in the dreams of the past, whether it be dreams of imagined kinship and fellowship amongst gay men in Stonewall era of the U.S. or united collectivities across race and class, bathed in an imagined harmony in our dreams,

marching for justice during the long Civil Rights movement. We need to ask what is at stake in such dreams? What do such dreams about the past make possible for us to face and consider in the present? What desires or presuppositions exist in these and other dreams of the past? In my case, as much as I desire to travel back in time to how I dream the utopia for gay men that was urban America in the 1970s, I know that this dreaming on my part ignores some realities of this history-as-dream, such as my overly determined fantasizing creating idealized conditions in which I would have liked to have lived at the expense of confronting the reality of History, what Jameson (1981) partly meant when he said, “History is what hurts, it is what refuses desire and sets inexorable limits to individual as well as collective practices” (p. 102). For Jameson, the dreams I create about a utopian, idealized (and, dare I say, hedonistic) time I might have enjoyably inhabited as a gay man of the 1970s is what he calls a ruse, a narrative unconscious that distorts my historical understanding, getting in the way of (for Jameson) the very political (Marxist) work that is to be done. What a way to kill a dream, though.

Thus, if such work is necessary when engaging with the dreamwork of learning history, how might we then work towards this kind of engagement? In his ethnographic study of dreaming as a metaphor of history for inhabitants of the Greek island of Naxos, Stewart (2017) claimed that much of what passes for historical thinking and historical understanding in our present (Western) paradigm of history is too bound up within teleological figures of “linear temporal succession” that privilege a search for causation and the eradication of anachronism (p. 197). By privileging these approaches to the past, Stewart argued, we run the risk of “exclud[ing] alternative modes of thinking about and representing the past as forms of “history” (p. 197). When considering dreams and dreaming as a form of historical (un)consciousness, the emphasis is on how one reflects upon a connection to the past, a form of connection or attachment that helps shape our imaginaries of the past through a kind of “internal conversation” when both asleep and awake, unconscious and conscious (Ogden, 2005, p. 5). If this internal conversation seems to verge on prioritizing the fictive and the imaginary, the made-up over the real, I should emphasize that such a binary is not at stake in my experiment of curriculum theorizing on offer here. This is because of the very condition of the past and our (living) relation to the past in the present. One of the fundamental realities of history that history educators can apprehend from considering history as dreamwork is that a person can never be in front of the past, staring at it directly; instead, we can only stare at the trace of the past, the remnant or residue that the past leaves behind for us to encounter.

This is the condition of a historical encounter Ricoeur (2004) spoke of as the “two aims, two intentionalities” of the past, one of which is the act of dreaming or imagining “directed toward the fantastic, the fictional, the unreal, the possible, the utopian,” set in opposition to memory, which is “directed toward prior reality” and of “the temporal mark” of things and events we remember (p. 6). The role of memory, despite the immensely productive outcomes of memory-work on personal/individual, collective/social, and national/cultural scales, has, I argue, much less significance for the work of history education than dreamwork because a history educator operates within the space of their dreams of a past that colors, animates, and moves their teaching of it, not in the realm of memory. This engagement plays out through the relational experiences that result from pedagogical intentions and their enactments in history classrooms.

History education in this regard is always about the unreal, the possible, and the utopian to use Ricoeur’s terms again. We can see this in contemporary terms over the debates of flags, statues, and other material commemoration of the Confederate States of America that seceded from the United States in the 1860s over the right to continue brutal practices of enslavement. The stakes of this working-out and working through the repressed trauma of racism through the memory work

of state flags and early-twentieth-century statues of the Lost Cause relate more to memory work, what Johnson (2018) describes as “memory-traces,” an investment in memory that materializes in an object with traces of the past visible on a surface reading of the object as pastness. I approach a history educator’s memory relationship with histories of the Lost Cause from a different angle, more as dreamwork than memory work, an orientation that seeks not to find traces of the past on the surface, but buried within at an unconscious level of identarian desires of race and nation, of affective drives such as shame and anger. History educators alive today cannot physically remember the existence of the Confederacy during the nineteenth century, even if an educator is teaching deeply within a space highly structured and colored by cultural memories of the Lost Cause (as when a history teacher may refer to the U.S. Civil War as the War of Northern Aggression or The War Between the States). As dreamwork instead of memory work, the Lost Cause exists in our history teaching more as multiple emergences of traces of how our psyche and desire wrestle with the Civil War, whether it stems from a fond tinge felt when one hears the opening notes of “Dixie” being played, or a stirred emotion of pleasurable defiance when dreaming what a young recruit in Virginia might have felt enlisting to fight for the Confederacy, or of the rotting decay of the Lost Cause as a toxic miasma wafting in one’s dreams of the Civil War, triggering rage when reckoning how many in the Confederacy wanted to die to uphold the right to own enslaved persons. For one history educator, the dreamwork of the Lost Cause renders during a class lesson a feeling of *dis*-placement in a contemporary society that is changing in its *em*-placement of race and racial justice, which the educator may ascribe to the loss of a right and honorable history as perceived in dreams of the Lost Cause. For another history educator, the dreams of the Lost Cause are ripe places to cut through and against during a class lesson, severing ties to a racist past, to places, attitudes, and people of a South gone away with the wind that finds expression in their dreams for perhaps a more racially just and progressive South or a more strongly united United States that finally tears free from romantic dreams of a lost South and a lost national cause.

Yet all of this is happening in the pedagogical space differently and not perceptible in the way other curricula exist. Unlike observing a property of gravity in a physics class, observing the property of history in a history class is to observe the effects of traces of the past in our dreams. To think more of this, consider what Baudrillard (1997) said about dreams, which he claimed are “a fantastic experience of a reality” that “are capable of producing a psychological perspicacity, a reading of others and their mode of thinking which is far superior to the knowledge we have of them in reality” (p. 64). This unreality, or, more accurately, a more-than-fantastic reality, unearths, opens up, and brings forth desires on the past within us. This spills forth in our classrooms when we have those opportunities history education affords us to share these reflections, these dreams, of the past operating at the unconscious level in our teaching. In the following two sections, I describe examples of this dreamwork within courses I teach in history and social studies education for M.Ed. candidates who are teachers of history and social studies students at the middle and high school level.

Dreams of the Good War

In a course titled “Teaching Social Studies in the Secondary School,” I invite students to ponder why the concepts of war and warfare figure so prominently in the curriculum of history education courses in the U.S., both in courses about the national history of the United States, which

follows a string of wars around which the history of the nation appears to cohere, as well as in world history courses, which often use wars as markers of social and political change in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, but rarely in Africa. In the case of the United States, we consider why there are many ways to critique wars that feature prominently in pedagogical narrations of the nation's history except for the Second World War, sometimes referred to as "The Good War" (Terkel, 1984). Wars such as the War of 1812, the Spanish-American War, the First World War, the Cold War's "hot wars" in Korea and Vietnam, as well as U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are examples of U.S. military conflict that social studies teachers can reasonably be expected to invite students to question and critique in terms of causes, necessity, and America's involvement. The Second World War stands out not only from a narrative position in which it is deemed almost unimpeachable and unassailable in its historical significance and legacy but also because it occupies such a commanding presence in the U.S. History school curricula as well as in public pedagogies of popular culture, museums, and memorials. Whereas other units of instruction in the curriculum typically occupy a few weeks or less of instruction, curriculum on the Second World War is expansive and often includes within its scope lessons on the rise of the Third Reich in Germany, the Holocaust in Europe, the Pacific Theater of war, and, increasingly in recent years, effects of the Second World War on the U.S. homefront, such as mass industrialization and the forced relocation and incarceration of Japanese-Americans. Bodnar (2010) demonstrated a complex and competing set of ways Americans have historicized the war, dreaming of the war in both tragic and romantic ways as a singular defining trope of heroism, valor, and sacrifice structuring the desires of the national psyche. It follows, then, that these desires play into the dreams history educators in the United States have about this "Good War."

Before engaging in this exploration of what we convey about the Second World War, I have students free write what comes to mind when they think of the Second World War. Responses occasionally include images of grandfathers or great-grandfathers who fought in the war. Other items range from mental images of tanks, planes dropping bombs, and soldiers with guns on ships cruising from the United States towards the Atlantic coast of Europe. Sometimes Pearl Harbor will be mentioned, and at other times students will mention images of parades held in the United States when soldiers returned to the United States after the Second World War's end. One student this past spring semester mentioned the "Keep Calm and Carry On" sign displayed in Great Britain. Another mentioned the Marvel comic characters Captain America, who fights Nazis in some of his comic book serials, and Magneto, whose origin story as an anti-hero begins as an imprisoned child in a Nazi concentration camp. Images of Hitler and of concentration camps in Poland loom largest in my students' responses in the five years I have conducted this activity. We discuss why and how these and other images exist "out there" both in the past, a time that exists as "back then," but also out there in the broad present of the imaginal construct of the Second World War II in our minds. The enduring presence of these constructs could be seen as evidence of what Blocker (2016) described as a kind of prosthetic relation we can have to the past in the present, in which

history as prosthesis (the use of one object to stand in the place of another that is ostensibly lost) is analogous to the baby blanket or stuffed animal, which helps the child transition away from dependence on and identification with the mother. (p. 151)

When my students engage in the dreamwork of teaching World War II, images of Operation Overlord landing on the beaches of Normandy, the sounds of the sirens during an air raid on London, and the hands jutting upwards of the small boy in the Warsaw Ghetto being detained for

transport to the camps all stand in prosthetically for desires we have *of* the past and *about* the past: stirrings of courage and bravery, the paralysis of fear and suspense when going into hiding, and the extreme shattering of debasement and abjection that was the Final Solution.

I then work with my students to think through these assorted representations of the War they elicit from their imagination, and we consider what these images do, what their effects are on our understanding of the history of the War, and how we teach that history to students. In doing so, I try to move students towards seeing that the cognitive value that many if not most of my students place on learning the history of the War reinforces what these symbolically valuable representations of the War do in creating their motivation for teaching it to students. How history educators “dream up” the War is a kind of production-system they cannot ever know as it resides in their unconscious. Can the War, I ask my students, be imagined, and, thus, conceived of in pedagogical terms, without conjuring the spectacle of Hitler? Why does Hitler exist so resolutely in their minds, in what Rosenfeld (2015) calls a “dialectic of normalization” reinforcing a kind of Hitler exceptionality, both preventing Hitler from fading from our unconscious history-making machine of the Second World War but also reinscribing a Hitler imaginary over and throughout the way we dream about the Second World War?

The dream images students share about the Second World War often emphasize the projections of violence, fighting, and combat through the righteousness and strength of soldiers. Upon further elicitation of what students mentally “see” of the Second World War, bombs, bullets, blood, barbed wire, smoke, fire, burnt and crumbling buildings fill out our lists. If their work as history educators puts them in a position to produce an image and create a representation of the Second World War for their students to learn, what is productive in this imagining? A retrospective understanding of the desires they have about the War in terms of its psychic power in the national consciousness plays out unconsciously in one’s teaching that engenders itself as a reconstruction of the Second World War. My goal is to help the students realize different operations of these (re)constructions of the War, what its purpose is within their teaching, and how the War itself, as curricular “content,” becomes a psychic object that a teacher honors, defends, attacks, buries, or may otherwise embrace or reject. I am always wondering if my students are dreaming of the War as safely historical, to be taught with reverence and gravity, or as something else. This “something else” is always difficult to articulate and describe, no doubt, in part, to the hallowed space the War occupies in the national psyche of the United States.

Another indication of the ways my students dream of the Second World War in their teaching comes through in their desires for teaching about the War. When I poll my students about which unit in history curriculum they are most excited to teach, the Second World War (in tandem with the Holocaust), is always at the top of the list. Few if any students have ever claimed the French Revolution or the Renaissance as their favorite units in the history curriculum; none ever select the Black Death or the Great Depression as their favorite units in history. Some will select ancient civilizations, usually Rome, or aspects of Asian history that tend to veer towards orientalist desires, such as a narrow interest in medieval Japan or the Mongol Empire. The Second World War is always at the top of the list. We have extended conversations about what the students hope or aspire to create and accomplish through their teaching of the Second World War to students in their history courses. Such aspirations reveal a desire to disclose a kind of virility to an overtly masculinized conception of the United States as a powerful combatant in warfare, existing in a dream in which the teacher candidates in my class evoke visceral, emotional, and intensive immediacy to the War itself, its participants, and its existence in their dreams as an exciting drama to enact for students in the theater of their minds. When teachers speak metaphorically about

“history coming alive,” it is, in a sense, making their dreams of history surface for students to consume through a particular history lesson. There is often an implied determination on the part of the teacher to have their dreams and their students’ dreams meet up and merge. This could lead to potentially affirmative and ethically desirable outcomes, such as what Simon (2005) recognized as “the ethical relationship between self and other in the narratives we tell” (p. 23). On the other hand, though, this could be seen as a violent cooption and control of dreaming, a disciplinary function that reinscribes the dreams of history within the realm of History in one direction—from the student always towards the teacher.

To dream of the Second World War *as curriculum* is to have a dream of belonging for what the Second World War signifies in the national psyche. If some collective dreams about a putative “essence” of America as an imagined concept have failed (most notably when teaching the history of The Vietnam War, for example), the Second World War offers an abundance of dream material that never seems to fade from the dreams my students have of their enactment of history teaching. Absent of any material objects that would do memory work of and for the teachers, such as being in the physical presence of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial depicting the raising of the U.S. flag at Iwo Jima in 1945, the representations of the War that populate the dreams of my students reflect and reveal a desire for the Good War and its psychic significance to signal in advance a “settled” historical narrative that follows signifying chains of certain symbolic figurations—Hitler-tanks-soldiers-bombers and more. On an intra-psychic level, these signifying chains are a blend of historical imagery and affects, such as a retrospective confidence my students ascribe without question to the legacy of the Allied forces in the Second World War and a humble sense of national pride when taking stock of the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. These fantasies, however, are always in the service of projecting fantasies of national heroism, valor, and strength. America during the War appears in my students’ dreamwork unquestionably and unassailably badass. Perhaps that is why so many of my students express enjoyment in teaching the Second World War; it’s the stuff of exciting dreams. Yet these dreams easily turn nightmarish if and when students dream up the shameful Other of Allied heroism and virtuousness during the war, such as the history of mass incarceration camps for Japanese and Japanese Americans or the devastating firebombing of cities in Germany and Japan.

These representations of the Second World War work as a resource in my students’ conceptions of the war as curricular objects of reverie, dreaming, and speculation for what the war’s significance can convey to their own students in the present. In a curricular theory of dreaming as that which this special issue considers, this pedagogical situation can be no less important than factual material in cognitive aspects and pedagogical content knowledge the history educators possess about the Second World War. Thus, my students will frame their dreams of teaching lessons of the Second World War about the heinous policies of Hitler, the courage of soldiers on the beaches of Normandy, the cunning resolve of resistance fighters, and others who occupy their dreams by indexing this material from the dreamwork or fantasia of history from representational files of the London Blitz, military campaigns in the Sahara Desert, and incidental knowledge from popular films ranging from *Saving Private Ryan* to *Dunkirk*. It should not be assumed in the dreams of history educators that the factual or the fantastic have priority in framing curricular knowledge of the Second World War. Rather, focusing on the dreams my students bring to their curriculum thought and planning involves creating opportunities in class for interpenetration of the dream elements to support their teacher thinking.

Conclusion

Similar to the Benjaminian conception of the critical historian traveling through the dreamscapes of a people asleep, a critically oriented history educator can stand within a rushing river of history education curriculum and view how the historical content that floods over them is composed of direct expressions of an historical unconscious and the visions they have not of their own past, but of a broader, larger sense of the past. But, as with all dreams, such visions eventually fade fuzzily out of sight, cause embarrassment, produce fixations, or cloud how we see realities around us. The effects of such dreaming are tremendous for teachers and the pedagogical work they do with their dreams in history classrooms. When we invite history educators to consider what their dreams of history recirculate, as created images or reinforced representations consumed in the study of history, they can work towards selecting, shaping, and structuring aspects of their history curriculum that reflect not only the implications of the mental images they dreamed “up,” but also endeavor to dream “on.” The mental processes of dreaming history induce many responses and sensations, as seen in the examples shared of my students’ learning to teach about the Second World War. Further, the moment of engaging with one’s dreams of history can be productively viewed as a dialogue between a past understanding or recognition of one’s knowledge of the past and a future-oriented sense of what the history educator brings with them as a mental assemblage produced through the analysis of dreamwork undertaken in moments of learning to teach. An imaginal, and imaginative, reworking of the contents of a history educator’s dreams is central to the more technical, conscious rationality of lesson planning and curriculum design. Dreamwork stimulates us to engage in history as a form of metaphorical or figurative time travel, imagining how we might have come to know the past that we think we know as it moves through the desires we bring to our teaching about the past.

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Dreaming as the Pursuit of Emotional Truth in Teaching and Teacher Education

BRIAN CASEMORE

George Washington University

IN THIS ESSAY, I EXPLORE DREAMING as a process in the lives of two new teachers, each case reflecting the work of dreaming as a pursuit of emotional truth present in waking life. The two accounts emerge from my work as a teacher educator. The first characterizes the emotional situation of a new teacher traversing the boundary between teacher education and the first year of teaching. The teacher, Laura, recalls engaging with the rich complexity of curriculum in a teacher education course, but she dismisses the experience as a dream, an unreachable ideal. I consider the emotional significance of her ambivalent dream in the context of her teaching in, what she calls, a “scripted school.” The second account focuses on dreaming as a narrative quality of an autobiography written by a preservice teacher, Matt, in a teacher education course. This autobiography of “learning from experience” discloses how the drive toward emotional truth, manifest in the reverie of waking life, necessarily confronts unknowable elements of subjectivity. Reflecting on the lives of these new teachers in the context of psychoanalytic thought, I characterize and call for attention to dreamwork as a dimension of teacher education that exceeds and challenges the standardization of teacher professional knowledge and expertise.

Dreaming as Emotional Truth Drive

James Grotstein (2004) posits the pursuit of emotional truth as a fundamental drive of the psyche, a drive toward unknowable and ineffable reality that registers a sense of truth—and its disruption—in emotional experience and that compels curiosity about one’s existence and one’s relationship with objects and others. Grotstein derives the concept of an “emotional truth drive” from the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion’s theory of mind (p. 1081). Truth as an absolute, Grotstein explains, cannot be attained but is felt intuitively, generating emotional turbulence that is mediated through “unconscious thinking processes,” namely dreaming and the dreamlike dimensions of waking life (pp. 1081–1083). As we develop knowledge, always incomplete, about internal and external reality, the emotional valence of thought bears a sense of truth, “affirming our sense of being *real* and impelling us to search for the *real* in others,” while sustaining a quest for truth in unknowable “ultimate reality” (p. 1094).

What lies wholly beyond our grasp but detectable as “sense impressions” in immanent experience, Bion refers to as “O”—the “term for an ineffable and inscrutable domain that lies beyond imagistic and symbolic reality” (Grotstein, 2004, p. 1096). *O*—“infinite, ever-evolving, ever-transient, all too chaotically meaningful mystery and uncertainty” (p. 1096)—stirs in the sphere of our internal and external object relations as “sense impressions of emotional experience,” the painfulness of which provokes evasion of the experience or the emergence of a mental state capable of “suffering the *truth* of the emotional pain” and thus evolving subjectivity (p. 1087). *O*, then, is registered psychically in unconscious phantasy as a “personal, subjective truth about reality,” a provisional *emotional truth* that constitutes and necessitates ongoing “learning from experience” (Grotstein, 2007, pp. 139–143).

The drive for emotional truth establishes and sustains dreamlife as a realm of emergent unconscious personal significance.¹ As “*imaginative fictions that preserve emotional truths*,” dreams flourish, Grotstein (2009, p. 736, emphasis in original) explains, as the psyche symbolizes, flexibly contains, and integrates the emotional complexity of experience. The process of dreaming, therefore, is “a form of mentalization” and “emotional cognition and perception” that partially obscures truth, abating and deferring its disruptions, while making truth, infinite and ineffable, available for subjective encounter and for reflective and associative thought (p. 736).

The work of dreaming appears, although it is not wholly disclosed, in dreams recalled from sleep and in diurnal reveries, symbolizing emotional experience continuously with varying qualities of psychical containment, the truth capaciously and flexibly held in unconscious thought or anxiously rendered and constricted, approaching the troubled condition of “undreamt dreams” (Ogden, 2005). Through the work of dreaming, the sensations, feelings, and affects that constitute “emotional experience,” serving as “truth’s envoys,” find passage, however circuitous, into conscious thought (Grotstein, 2004, p. 1094). Expanding Freud’s conception of dreams, Bion (as cited in Grotstein, 2009) theorizes dreaming as an unconscious thinking process that protects wakeful perception and enables conscious thought, “disencumbering consciousness of an excess of sense-impressions of emotional experience” and translating the excess—via the vividness, specificity, and feeling of conscious, lived experience—into dream narratives (pp. 742–744).² Grotstein thus reveals dreaming as the preservation and pursuit of emotional truth about the self, the other, and their constitutive alterity.

Within this framework, I attend to the work of dreaming in the lives of new teachers—to the reveries, associative thoughts, and ventures in capacious subjectivity that enable them to wander and wonder in teaching, to register the troubling and enigmatic affect that emerges there, and to symbolize the provisional knowledge and insight that reflects and sustains their call to teaching as an existential vocation. I offer interpretations of these narratives to expand our understanding of the affective landscape of teacher education and to consider how the field might open further to the complex, continuous, and biographically particular emotional work of teaching.

The Teacher’s Dream as “Isolated Little Capsule”

In a conversation about tensions in the experience of teaching, Laura, a new high school social studies teacher, elaborates her struggle to recover a mindset of openness and creativity in her daily work.³ Laura feels lost in the landscape of standardized schooling, and she symbolizes the emotional difficulty of sustaining a sense of her teaching vocation in an institution largely antagonistic to her creativity and intellectual life. Facing this difficulty, Laura reflects on her

teacher education, associating creative freedom in teaching with “Curriculum Development in the Humanities,” a course that I co-taught and that Laura took at the end of her teacher education program. Laura works through the tension of becoming a teacher in a conversation with my co-instructor and me, conveying a sense that the creative potential of teaching collapses in the confines of the school. Her reflections evoke the ambivalence of dreaming when the external world—the institution of education, in particular—cannot sustain thought about the emotional experience the dream bears.

Our teacher education course focused on teaching literature in secondary schools and developing interdisciplinary curricula in the humanities. For the course, Laura selected a work of literature she wanted to share with other teachers; explored its significance in the context of various works of art, literature, history, and theory; and created a conversation about this literary curriculum with visiting high school students. A social studies teacher with a vital interest in fiction, Laura selected a collection of short stories for her project depicting the lives of young women engaged in emotionally complex situations—stories, she explains, that reveal the “inner workings of their protagonists.” Laura brought focus to one short story that illuminates the social demands and personal expectations that shape teacher identity, challenging students to consider how “our personal biography” shapes “our view of teachers.” For Laura, it seems, the curriculum development work in our class provoked fundamental questions about the conditions and purposes of teaching.

In our conversation, Laura elaborates the enormous pressure she faces as a new teacher in a school, remarking on her frustration with unworkable technologies, standardized lessons in social-emotional learning, and responsibilities that alienate her from professional and intellectual community. When prompted to speak about our course, Laura’s tone shifts, her mild distress from the teaching day giving way, it seems, to the lightness of a pleasant reminiscence. She then becomes more animated, characterizing the valuable experience the course afforded her—the freedom to select her own curriculum resources, the time for focused study of curriculum scholarship, and the opportunity to build intellectual community with her peers. In the moment, Laura’s recollection of our class feels, in part, to be an offer of reassurance to my co-instructor and me that the course was meaningful to her. However, Laura also portrays her deeply engaged experience of study, her words evoking a sense of flexible and capacious “psychic dimensionality” (Grotstein, 2000, pp. 83-99)—room for thought and experience—that threads through the objects, ideas, and interlocutors of curriculum. In a burst of expressiveness, she conjures up a scene of study that the three of us shared: “I had material that I love,” she explains,

and I had complete freedom to do whatever with it and interpret these ideas in whatever way I wanted. ... I was personally challenging myself, and I had so much time and so much reflection and so much collaboration. ... I had people who I trusted but who were also not judgmental. ... It was just like, let’s discuss this problem and kind of figure it out together.

Laura characterizes her creative and interpretive freedom, her subjective investment in aesthetic and intellectual resources, and her singular path of study, one incited, it seems, by her experience of “subjective non-coincidence” (Pinar, 2017, pp. 99-100). “I was personally challenging myself,” she explains, suggesting that, in the realm of an emergent curriculum—of which she was a part and in which she had creative authority—she encountered herself as one to be challenged in the pursuit of meaning and one capable of challenging herself in that regard. In

the language of everyday self-consciousness, Laura thus conveys the givenness of subjective incompleteness—of otherness—that, as Pinar argues, makes study possible.

As Laura's teacher, I have a strong wish that her teacher education experience sustains her in the profession. Under the sway of this hopefulness, during our conversation, I grasp her description of curriculum development as the authentic pursuit of study in the life of a teacher.⁴ Conveyed with an ebullience, it suggests to me a sense of boundlessness in her work, calling to mind Pinar's (2017) comment on the subjective space of study: "Having room to move—as we once said in the vernacular—follows from an expansive subjectivity structured by enabling relationships with others, texts, and experience" (p. 106).

Later in our conversation, however, I come to understand more fully that Laura experiences herself as having very little room to move in her school, compelling her to refer ambivalently to this remembered, seemingly lost, scene of curriculum development as "the dream of lesson planning." With regard to dreaming, Laura's recollection of our class does indeed elicit a state of reverie in me; our subsequent conversation, however, does not sustain the state of mind, which provokes the thought that Laura is symbolizing dreamwork at risk of collapse.

"Reverie," in Bion's (1962/2004) theory, refers to a calm reception of emotional turbulence that surfaces from and fosters the wakeful dreaming of emotional life (pp. 34–36); and psychoanalytic research discloses how reveries emerge as co-constructions—as relationally generated and experienced states of emotional exploration (Ferro, 2009). Laura's account of creative freedom calls forth reverie in me, therefore, that (in one interpretation) represents a shared state of reverie, enabling me to encounter the emotional situation of her teaching life. Her reminiscent, increasingly animated vocal tone in the conversation bolsters her words—"so much time and so much reflection and so much collaboration"—and imbues the conversation with a sense of capacious "mental space" (Young, 1994). If, in the moment, the reverie compels me to idealize her creative agency and subjective freedom, it also expands my grasp of her emotional situation, enabling me to register Laura's experience of creativity and freedom as a promise of teacher education diminishing in her daily work.

Laura wonders if such a mindset can actually be regained in the milieu of the school, where her professional life is deeply structured by scripted curricula, a strict testing regime, and a lockstep temporality. As a new teacher, she wishes for the opportunity to create curriculum without having to be "on the same page as other people" and for time to collaborate not limited by the purposes of standardization and testing. "You know, everything is too busy," she says,

Two mornings a week I have meetings for [professional development on standards and assessments] and then one morning a week I have a team meeting where we discuss ... a standardized test they instituted for Social Studies. ... I would like to think that if there was more time, there would be more natural collaboration, and I think I'm a little worried that there won't be.

Laura describes a continual deferral of meaningful engagement with curriculum. Repeatedly, she explains, "autonomy" is postponed, and the opportunity for "original content creation" is delayed by the culture of teacher accountability.

Laura acknowledges that outside the fluid intellectual space of her curriculum studies course, in the difficulty of her current professional life, she might recuperate an orientation to curriculum as an emergent sphere of meaning and begin again her own creative curriculum practice. "Even if I don't feel like I'm where I want to be," she explains, "I have this sense I can

do it.” Such statements demonstrate Laura’s ambivalence about pursuing creative opportunities, revealing both an anxious self-subjection and a hopefulness that resonates with her passion for study, teaching, and social critique.

Laura describes the promise of a teaching life called forth as she witnessed her father’s teaching career unfold, discovered her profound interest in history, and came to understand education as a practice of democracy. Laura’s narrative about her call to teaching, threaded with ambivalence, therefore, expands the sense of her teaching labor as a pursuit of emotional truth. “I loved school, and so I always thought I would be a teacher,” she explains, a vision demanding that she immerse herself in the work and ask: “Can I teach? Can this be something that is viable?” These existential questions, Laura explains, encouraged her to explore teaching in various disciplines and locations, leading her ultimately to a university-based teacher education program and a position as a secondary social studies teacher. The questions about her vocation continue to sustain her as she negotiates a place of teaching in a school.

“The school,” however, as Huebner (1999) reminds us, “is not designed to support the living that teaching is” (p. 379); and for Laura, this means feeling stuck in a situation where knowledge and meaning succumb to the instrumentalization of teaching. The emotional truth she approaches, therefore, resides in the conflict between a calling to teach—a vocation to be lived “intentionally and openly” among others called to educate—and the fact of “teachers and teaching being shaped and pummeled by forms of schooling” (Huebner, 1999, p. 380). The dreamlife of teaching must confront the undreamable character of the school, “where the capacity for dreaming is overwhelmed by the disturbing nature of what is being dreamt” (Ogden, 2005, pp. 23–24).

As Laura labors under “policy’s excess,” her pedagogy largely “mapped and prescribed by mandated curricula, standards, assessments and audits” (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p. 8), her psychic space wanes: “I’m hating myself for doing this,” she says,

you know, for just falling into this thing—to this idea of what I should be teaching and how I should be teaching it. ... I am not doing it the way I want to do it. I don’t know enough to change it right now. I’m too busy to change it, and then ... I am making excuses for myself. That’s the thought that goes through my head every day ... It’s this feeling of being forced into a place I don’t want to be in.

Laura speaks from the space of, what she calls, the “scripted school,” where school leaders “pay lip service to the idea that [testing] is not everything,” while urging compliance with the culture of standardization and the ideology of the achievement gap, where educational technologies evoke the fantasy that “everything [is] streamlined,” but remind her continuously that “teaching is limited by things that are beyond [her] control,” and where the system of professional development—at first, it seems, “not a punitive thing”—emerges as an extension of a harsh teacher evaluation system. Laura speaks from the space of “the new professionalism” in teaching, where, as Brass and Holloway (2019) argue,

teachers are not de-professionalized, but re-professionalized ... to think and talk about teaching in terms of measurable outcomes, align their professional judgment with standards and rubrics, implement commercial curricula and professional development packages, render their work auditable to organizational managers and accreditation bodies and organize themselves in response to performance targets and pay-for-performance incentives. (p. 8)

The degree to which this reality is an enactment of fantasies of control, teachers who endure it are “dreamt into existence by others,” Pinar (1992) suggests, a confinement in others’ projections he discerned as the teacher was reconceived “from factory supervisor to corporate manager” (p. 234). Clarke and Phelan (2017) also characterize the life of the teacher in these conditions, describing teachers’ voices “relegated to the realm of . . . the political unconscious of education policy as the terrors and technologies of bureaucratic performativity make increasing inroads into the teacher’s soul” (p. 29). In the dispiriting movement of teachers into a sphere of education desiccated of human significance, what remains of the work of dreaming—the enigmatic drive toward emotional truth?

Laura reveals the flickering presence of her dreamwork where others’ fantasies of control hold sway. At one point, reflecting on the tension between our curriculum studies class and her present teaching situation, she suggests that, in the scope of her teaching life, the course was too minimal to be of significance. “I think it’s almost unfair,” she explains, “because it was such an isolated little capsule.” The course—in retrospect, a seemingly diminutive educational offering—once animated her, Laura clarifies, as “the dream of lesson planning,” evoking a sense of dreaming, if only to mark its dissipation. In Laura’s memory, dreaming imbues the creation of the lesson plan, that most rigid institutional form of curriculum, reminding us, as does Rocha (2021), of “the secret of objects, a secret that endures in the bleakest of places and times”—that objects, curricular objects in this context, comprise and express the subjectivity of the persons who create them (p. 29). Although Laura can recall the reverie of curriculum making, the dreamlife of curriculum, she suggests, cannot be reanimated in the scripted school. Referring to the class, Laura says: “That is the dream of lesson planning, but I don’t know. I don’t know. I think it makes [teaching in school now] seem so much harsher because of the disparity.”

In this moment, Laura marks a split between a vibrant educational experience and conditions of schooling that obstruct subjective investment in curriculum: a split, as well, between teaching as an existential project—being “in the process of becoming a teacher with others” (Britzman, 2007, p. 3)—and teaching as an alienating endeavor, rendered so by institutional “forces of conformity” (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, pp. 25–26). To distinguish these opposed realities, Laura uses a conventional notion of a “dream” as an ideal to designate the school as a place where a particular dream of the teacher—curriculum as a sphere of creativity and conversation—cannot be borne in mind. She ushers in the dream to signify the circumstances of its disavowal, drawing attention to the “undreamt and undreamable experience” (Ogden, 2005, p. 5) of teaching and teacher education.

“A call to be a teacher often wears thin,” Huebner (1999) suggests. “But disillusionment . . . does not mean that the call—the vocation of teaching—is over” (p. 379). As Laura explores the rift in her teaching life that severs the curriculum *as a complex and eventful experience* from the curriculum *as an institutional plan*, her call to the teaching life resonates in the emotional wrangle with a dream made irrelevant by the order of the school. Daring to negotiate this tension, she invites us to hear the call of the dream enveloped in the “isolated little capsule” of our educational past, muffled by the clanging mechanisms of curricular control, and reverberating in the disappointment of new teachers confronting the troubled landscape of contemporary schooling. To foster and sustain the dreamwork of the new teacher, teacher education will have to consider its own troubled reveries, where the field’s fantasies of creative, connected, and agentic teachers give way to the teacher’s pursuit of emotional significance. In the next section of the paper, the complexity of that pursuit is revealed in the dreamscape of teacher autobiography.

The Dreamscape of Teacher Autobiography

In an essay about “learning from experience,” Matt, a former student of mine, narrates an encounter with his father, asleep on a living room chair, that brings an awareness of his father’s suffering, the loss of a dreamworld the two of them shared, and a demand that he learn to sleep on his own. The significance of sleep in the narrative and the poetic, dreamlike character of the scene of memory invite me to consider how dreamwork is at play in this autobiography—written within the domain of teacher education, yet disrupting the conventions of teacher knowledge presumed to afford “simple induction” into the profession (Taubman, 2012, p. 22). As Matt reflects on the toil of memory and describes enigmatic speech and images in terms of their life-saving capacity, he reveals elemental functions of symbolization stirring in conscious experience, confirming the contemporary psychoanalytic understanding of dreamwork as “a continuous process that belongs to waking life” (Ferro, 2002, p. 598). Matt’s autobiography thus discloses what teacher education disavows: the teacher’s subjectivity is, as Taubman (2012) writes, “an unruly dream-like interplay between an unconscious and an ego” that “plays havoc” with the field’s prescriptions for teacher reflection and disposition (p. 23).

Matt wrote his essay in my course “Development and Diversity,” which engages preservice teachers in the study of human development and social diversity through a framework of social psychoanalysis. Students compose two autobiographies in the course, one focused on the emotional experience of learning and the other on social identity, each assignment requiring students to write an autobiographical narrative and then to elaborate their experience using theory from the course. The assignments enable preservice teachers to reflect on experiences of otherness that constitute the self and infuse their engagements with the social world. Matt submitted his dreamlike autobiography for the assignment about the emotional experience of learning, specifically as theorized by Bion.

In his essay, Matt describes how, as a child, he discovered his father’s drug addiction, a “stumbl[ing] on something horrible” beyond his capacity to know, and, thereby, how he lost “a comfort, a warmth that only [his father] could provide.” Narrating the experience is difficult, Matt explains, “not so much because of the emotions it conjures, but because of the many fractions, particles, grains, and strands that [he has] lost in the sweep of time.” He chooses the story, nonetheless, to convey his understanding of “learning from experience.” Through this writing, Matt realizes that the event of disillusionment in his youth, the rupture in meaning and sense of wellbeing, provoked questions about his existence and his relationship with others that necessitated new forms of learning, knowing, and communicating. The “weight” and the “gift,” he explains, remain with him today. Matt writes: “The man I am, the man I was, the man I hope to be—all are contained in this rendering of a discovery I made as a young boy.”

Matt wanders in the realm of the discovery, collecting the elements of a narrative that might attenuate its force. Through a line of associations both obscuring and revealing, Matt works his way back to the containing milieu forged in the relationship with his father. The regressive journey involves recollecting “alien” and “evocative” objects that call forth a sphere of emotional experience for working through those very objects and their internal implications.⁵ Matt first recalls the “family business” that his mother and father shielded from his view. “All she ever yelled about was the needles,” Matt begins his narrative, then conjuring his mother’s voice: “*The needles, [Richard]. I thought you kicked it.*” Hearing of needles, but never seeing them, envisioning them, but at a loss for their purpose, Matt seeks understanding of the place of needles in his family. His desire to know, however, is diverted and frustrated by his mother and father. “I wanted to see [the

needles],” he writes, “but she said they were too sharp. *They’ll prick your foot, son.* Dad agreed. *This is family business, boy.* They shut the door in my face.”

For Matt, the closed door in his memory evokes the sense of concealment in his father’s visage. Matt associates to his father’s face, his beard, his grooming—a look created with “the basic tools a man needs to maintain his appearance . . . clippers, shaving cream, comb and brush,” all packed into “a faded blue Bell Atlantic shaving kit.” Matt writes further:

Dad was an exceptionally well-groomed man. His salt-and-pepper goatee recalled Burt Reynolds, c. 1997, the shape perfectly aligned, the hairs perfectly trimmed. . . . Even later, when his skin turned yellow, you could count on dad’s beard looking fresh as all hell.

If Matt’s memory of his father’s look hovers around his father’s illness, it also affords Matt passage into the space of reverie the two of them shared, an immersive dreamscape shaped and enlivened by cartoons, secrets, late-night snacks, and a father’s storied, colloquial wisdom. Matt writes:

When I think of that beard, I think of Toonami and *Dragonball Z*, of toasted PB&J and the smell of fresh cigarettes. I think of *Batman & Robin*, my dad cradling a bowl of Cocoa Puffs in his lap, a cigarette hanging loosely from two calloused fingers. He used to sit by the chimney and exhale through the vent. *Don’t tell your mother, bud.* This was our secret, and our story. After hours, when mom and baby [Tim] went to bed, dad and I would set up camp around the chimney and watch cartoons. He’d tell me about what it meant to be a man. He was full of truisms and country adages, picked up from his youth in the mountains. *It’s all in the knowin’ of the livin’ of a life*, he used to say. *Don’t you forget it.*

Matt’s narrative memory emerges from his teacher education coursework, specifically from his study of Bion’s psychoanalytic theory of learning, as elaborated in Margot Waddell’s (2002) book *Inside Lives: Psychoanalysis and the Growth of the Personality*. The concepts resonate with his experience, compelling him to tell this story; and yet, he explains, he cannot make “coherent meaning out of the experience the way that Waddell’s psychoanalysts do.” Tempted to emulate the narrative fluidity of the course text, while composing his essay, Matt runs the story by his mother and brother, only to find they “bristle at some of the details (Did it really happen that way? But wasn’t it—? and What about—?).” Facing these questions, Matt retreats from the goals of clarity and coherence. “This is *my* story,” he writes, “and it is not finished yet.”

For Bion (1962/2004) “learning from experience” is learning that affords emotional connection to one’s inner reality such that the telos of learning is not to accumulate knowledge, but rather to sustain a relation to the thing, the object, the other available for knowing—learning of an emotional quality and significance that it sustains the process of coming to know. Reading this theory, Matt lingers with the idea of an early developmental shift from egoism to altruism, “struck,” he explains, by the psychic resonance of the infant’s coming to awareness of the other as having a separate existence and complex inner world. Matt describes this shift in awareness as “so developmentally fundamental that [it] echoes throughout the rest of a person’s life,” as Matt attempts to recover his first recognition of “the other in [his] dad,” his first, in his words, “embracing the subject in him, weak and tortured.”

As he charts the line of autobiography, Matt describes further his seeking a narrative form that will hold the difficult memory. “As I look back on the past,” he writes, “I have a choice: open

the aperture and see it in its totality, a narrative with bookends, rising action, climax, resolution; or narrow my lens, focus on singular images, integral moments, little balls of fire.” Eschewing, ultimately, the clear and complete narrative arc, Matt pursues the fire. He writes:

One night I couldn't sleep. I crept out into the hallway, where I was greeted by a familiar darkness. When dad set up shop, he turned off all the lights. He said he felt safer in the dark, where nobody could see him. At the end of the hallway, down the stairs and across the room, there was a single, floating dot of fire, the ember of dad's cigarette cutting through the black. This was a beacon and a comfort to me, a promise I wouldn't be alone against the night. As I approached, the cigarette took shape, and so did dad. Only something was off. His breathing too regular, his shape too still. He had fallen asleep. *Nodding off*, mom used to call it.

This enigmatic particular, the “floating dot of fire,” cast against the dark, serves as a threshold of meaning, however nebulous and emergent, and as a means of reading the dreamscape of memory anew. This image from Matt's memory bears an uncanny resemblance to an already uncanny image of psychoanalysis offered by Bion: “When conducting an analysis,” Bion (as cited in Grostein, 2007) says, “one must cast a *beam of intense darkness* so that something which has hitherto been obscured by the glare of illumination can glitter all the more in the darkness” (emphasis in original, p. 1).

Matt recovers the obscure detail, casting his refusal of narrative coherence, it seems, as a *beam of intense darkness*. He does so, he writes, because as “details slip in and out of focus ... dad oscillates from fossil to vivid form.” In the oscillation, knowledge remains uncertain, but in its incompleteness, it sustains the relationship with his father, whose loss he now mourns. This is Matt's “learning from experience,” a learning that recovers the vividness of a relation from fossilized memory; through images animating, enigmatic, and slipping from perception; oriented to moments of being that are integral to experience and yet that trouble his capacity to signify them. In this narrative mode, I want to suggest, Matt engages in writing tilted toward wakeful sleep, dreaming his autobiography and his intellectual engagement with theory in a way that invites reflection on the emergence of reverie in the labor of study and the work of becoming a teacher.⁶

At “the foundation of dreams,” and the reveries of waking life, Bezoari (2014) argues, “is a pressure to make visible—and hence thinkable and communicable—the part of an emotional experience that has not yet found a symbolization appropriate to the demands of an individual's psychic life” (pp. 14–15). Matt returns this dreaming of emotional life to the teacher education that elicits it, compelling me to ask: Can teacher education make room for the symbolization of emotional experience inherent to learning and the demands of the teacher's psychic life? Matt's narrative continues where he found his father sleeping:

As I turned to leave, something caught my eye: dad's shaving kit, wedged beneath his body. Something stirred in me. ... When I pulled the kit out, dad snorted, rolled over, and I swear I almost fainted out of fear. A beat passed, and I exhaled. He was asleep. I crept back up the stairs and into the bathroom. Scared of disrupting the uniform blackness outside, I opened the kit in the darkness. Reaching around inside, my fingers ran over familiar objects: a Barbasol can, the prickly teeth of a comb. And then, something different. Mom was right—the needle pricked me right in my index finger. I suppressed a yelp and

stuck the finger in my mouth. Blood. Without really knowing, I was aware I'd stumbled on something horrible. It was as if dread shot up through the needle and filled my body, seeped out through the pores and coated my skin.

Matt, again, casts a beam of intense darkness into his experience, but here it draws out no illuminated thing. In the utter dark, he stumbles through the “unthought known” (Bollas, 1987) to a place where reverie fails, where the other in his father pierces him, filling him with “nameless dread” (Bion, 1962/2004, p. 96). The story ruptures, and I struggle to locate myself as a reader, a teacher. Did I invite a story, an autobiographical study, that is more than my student, than I, can bear? What landscape of loss, illness, and dread must I traverse to respond? Is this teaching? Royle (2003) writes: “Who or what is a teacher? Who or what has taught the teacher? How did this teaching come about? Am I thinking my own thoughts? Where does a thought, an idea, a teaching begin?” (p. 53).

Matt pursues an educational purpose I have assigned him, yet the circuits of emotion he discovers exceed what I can hold in mind as a teacher educator, disrupting the fantasy that I am a teacher preparing students for arrival in a known and knowable, imaginable, and even livable profession. Matt's narrative initiates a crisis in my teaching, transforming it, demanding that I forgo an imagined goal—the “teaching self” as “totally coherent, self-sufficient and fully agentic” (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p. 34). In the wake of the crisis, I begin again my reading of Matt's autobiography, considering its affective intensities as sources of Matt's still emerging insight and as reverberations in my own experience. I take up teaching in a mode of what Mishra Tarc (2015) calls “fictive reading,” more open to the symbolic complexity of the student's experience: a readerly teaching by which I must “feel or follow the fragile lines of [the student's] mental efforts to communicate a sense of [self] to others” (p. 36).

Through a halting poetics of darkness and feeling, negated and hesitantly claimed, Matt recovers his thought about “that fateful night when [he] discovered [his] father was only a man.” Matt writes,

Of course, with the acknowledgment of my father's subjectivity came a newfound awareness of my own. The feeling of independence brought about by this transformation was at once startling and deeply lonely. ... It meant learning to sleep on my own.

It meant, as well, Matt explains, learning to live with the “weight of an identity” freighted with “promises of a life derailed.”

Undreamt dreams demand new relations of reverie, new relationships with oneself and others. Matt demonstrates this as he relocates the dreamwork he shared with his father into his relationship with his mother. He captures, therefore, the relational flux of dreaming, the variation in relational milieu, necessary for dreamwork to survive. For his survival, Matt writes, “I have only my mother to thank.” “When I reflect on the day she told me about my father's sickness,” he continues,

I am struck by her composure. ... My mother embraced me with a gaze that ensured I was the most important person in her world that day. When she explained the particulars of addiction to me, using new and strange vocabulary, she provided my experience with form.

She reduced the complexity of my trauma to simple words, ones I didn't even understand yet, but that nonetheless provided a comfort to me, promising me that even this disturbing mystery could be managed.

Matt follows his dreamlife as it shifts between scenes of self-formation and intersubjective experience; and he pursues it fully into the sphere of teacher education, where his capacity for learning from experience, distilled from parental relationships, calls for a teacher equally attuned to the intricate fabric of affect that constitutes his becoming.

Matt explores the emotional experience of learning untethered from images of formal education but fully infusing his subjectivity as a teacher. Moving his teacher education to “the frontier of dreaming” (Ogdens, 2001), he calls me to our shared labor of teacher becoming. As he negotiates the alterity that constitutes subjectivity, reading and writing its oneiric specificity and enigma, Matt draws me into an interpretive pedagogy that demands I trust my own capacity to dream. He also adumbrates the complex inner world of teachers more generally. The way Matt orients to his inner world, therefore, I want to suggest as an approach to the pursuit of emotional truth in teacher education. If the dreamlife of teaching is inherently “difficult knowledge” (Britzman, 1998), we might, as does Matt, embrace rather than attempt to solve the narrative dilemma it presents: opening the aperture, attempting to view life in its fullness, its order, and its coherence; *and* narrowing the lens to the particulars, the floating images, the associations that provoke thought but exceed conscious order and reflective grasp. To conduct autobiographical inquiry and teacher education in this tension is to pursue emotional truth in the ineffable dimensions of experience, where all that is undergone cannot be known, but where life is made by symbolizing the radiant trace of the other.

Conclusion

In this essay, I explore dreams in the lives of new teachers that reveal the subjective depth and complexity of the teacher education curriculum, conditions negated when the reflective work in preparing teachers remains moored in the promise of solving practical problems and instrumentally transforming teachers' perspectives and social commitments (Bierzynski, 2018). My teaching begins in this frame of teacher education, burdened by the discourses and practices of teacher accountability that structure my school's teacher preparation program, and saturated with my idealization of the vocation of teaching, the creative agency of the teacher, and the transformative potential of autobiography. As I attend to Laura's and Matt's dreamwork, however, my teaching becomes unmoored from the “conventions, culture, and social ideals” (Taubman, 2012, p. 22) of the field, veering from the field's imagined “teaching continuum,” bound as it is to the goals of measurable “competence” and “excellence” (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p. 95). Laura's ambivalent search for the dream encapsulated in the orders of schooling and Matt's wakeful entry into the troubled dreamscape of his youth evoke in me an “imaginative mode of affectively reading” (Mishra Tarc, 2015, p. 36) these experiences of teacher becoming. Their dreamwork—however diminished by or removed from formal schooling—demands my subjective distance from the procedures and protocols of teacher education, disrupting my own striving for pedagogical certitude, calling me into an emergent and speculative reading of their pursuit of emotional truth.

Attending to the dreamlife of new teachers can help us recover the *currere* of teacher education, the curriculum that emerges, as Pinar (2011) explains, from the “space and time of

subjectivity,” unfolding where the person experiences but does not conflate with the world and oneself (p. 8). At its foundation, psychoanalysis enables us to grasp the significance of life lived in this way: always at a distance, if an intimate distance, from self and other. In the distance that is subjectivity lie our dreams, “personal archival *fictions*” (Grotstein, 2007, emphasis in original, p. 281) of our emotional lives, threaded from infancy and early relationships through the skeins of experience and memory to the dreamlife of the present. To engage our dreams, then, is to venture into the elusive yet ever-present archive of emotional truth that makes the study of *currere*, the lived curriculum, an interminable labor of self-discovery.

If, as teachers, our mental lives are impoverished by institutional realities to which, we imagine, we should adapt, then the dream might unbind us from those structures. The dream might restore our capacity for thinking in the most difficult conditions that shape our teaching lives, enabling us to engage emotional and institutional difficulty with the abundant and complex resources of our inner worlds. To foster and sustain the dreamwork of the new teacher, teacher educators will have to take seriously the presence of their own dreamwork—to study the way their own “archival fictions” of anxiety, fear, joy, desire, loss, and longing imbue their calling to the work of teacher education.

Notes

1. Grotstein (2007) further describes dreaming as unconscious phantasy discernable “within the loop of experience” (p. 80).
2. In Bion’s account of dreaming, Grotstein identifies a fundamental shift in the conceptualization of the origin of dreams. Freud (1900/2001) understood the dream to be a disguised expression of an unconscious wish, specifically a “fulfillment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish” (p. 160). Bion, and Grotstein (2004) following him, however, characterize “emotional experience,” understood as a drive toward truth and knowledge, as the “first cause for the dreaming process” (p. 739). Although they function, to some degree, as a “curtain of illusion” (Bion, 1965/2018, p. 147), Grotstein (2004) argues, dreams do not emerge to oppose truth through a defensive wish-fulfillment, but rather to animate the pursuit of emotional truth.
3. I am grateful to my co-researcher Rachel Talbert for her insight into this conversation with Laura. The conversation emerges from Rachel’s and my larger research study on humanities-oriented teacher education.
4. Study, in Pinar’s (2017) elaboration, discerns and sustains a sense of interior otherness and complexity—which emanates from subjective non-coincidence with the world—as necessary for thought and the reconstruction of lived experience, necessary, as well, for “ethical engagement with alterity” within intersubjective experience (p. 99). The potential of the latter, in my hopeful reading of Laura’s memory of our class, is suggested in her account of trusted, non-impinging others sharing authority in the creation of curriculum.
5. See Bollas’ (2009) extensive discussion of “evocative objects” in the titular essay of his book *The Evocative Object World*; See Grotstein’s (2000) brief discussion of “alien objects” in his “lexicon” of “objects and their implications” (pp. 163–166).
6. See Grotstein (2007) for an account of the way “Bion dreamed his utterances and writings,” speaking and writing “in a transformational state of reverie (wakeful sleep)” (p. 15).

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What We (Un)Do With Dreams

Symbolizing Incompleteness Within the Work of Becoming in Teacher Education

KARYN SANDLOS

University of Illinois at Chicago

IN A CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL MOMENT marked by positivism and predictable learning outcomes, knowledge of complex social and emotional realities is relegated to the margins of educational experience. Within the context of teacher preparation, while we tend to emphasize “doing” through the application of knowledge and skills, less attention is paid to the repressions, silences, and breakdowns of meaning that “undo” our pedagogical and self-understandings. In the process of learning to become a teacher, the sense of doing and undoing are necessarily very close. A consideration of learning to become a teacher as both a doing and an undoing shifts the focus away from familiar discourses of mastery over knowledge and professional competencies to take the side of what Britzman (2016) has termed, “the emotional situation of human incompleteness” (p. 2). Britzman’s emphasis on interiority suggests there is something more to teacher preparation than linearity or predictable outcomes. For Britzman, the anxiety of incompleteness, at once an obstacle to and a resource for development, sets the stage for learning to imagine what is missing or unknowable.

Through an inquiry into the dream work of teacher preparation, this paper will explore how subjectivity and self-understanding are constituted through emotional experiences of uncertainty and internal change. Sigmund Freud (1914/2001), in his slim volume, *On Dreams*, describes dream work as, “the process by which the change from latent to manifest content is executed” (p. 8). A central function of the dream work is the transformation of latent, unknowable dream thoughts into manifest, knowable, if provisional, meanings. Dreams are an experimental form of thinking and action, Freud insisted, although this unconscious process is radically different from conscious reasoning. Instead of thinking in coherent ideas and concepts, dreams dramatize as-yet unknown thoughts, fragments, and feelings by transforming them into visual material. Like art, the dream work helps transfigure experiences from everyday reality, giving them new, symbolic form in ways that keep us alive to future possibilities. As Kelley (2002) argues, the symbolic labor of dream work is itself a vital method that enables thinking about and working through the struggles we face, individually and collectively, with creative agency.

In teacher preparation programs, pre-service students are tasked with imagining as-yet unknowable professional futures for themselves in ways that are necessarily out of step with what Clarke and Phelan (2017) refer to as, “the discourses of standardized teaching identities” (p. 6). Even as they are encouraged to imagine, however tentatively, their future classrooms and teaching identities, students must somehow integrate into their developing self-understanding the language of professional competency and expertise: differentiated instruction, learning outcomes, classroom management, and so on. Out of step with pedagogical mastery, the emotional situation of learning in teacher preparation often demands another venue of expression: through dreams, symptoms, or other unconscious actions. Phillips (2006), a contemporary psychoanalyst and interpreter of Freud, writes,

The dream is an opportunity to talk about obscure resources; apparently unheard-of desires, or versions of ourselves, or predictions of the future, or messages about our physiology or our destiny, or our wishes. Paradoxically, for the dream valuers, for the keepers of dreams, in our dreams we are at once most obscurely and most essentially ourselves. (p. 113)

As Phillips suggests, rather than providing access to an “essential” identity or authentic self-understanding, dreams offer up the obscure, symbolic resources needed to bring emotional complexity and depth to our narratives of becoming. What would it mean to attend to the various forms these symbolic resources take in teacher preparation and understand what we make of them? In the face of bureaucratic demands and deadening structures, how might our associative objects open new possibilities for enlivened thinking and narratives of becoming?

In 2017, I left my position as Associate Professor of Art Education at a private art school in Chicago to start a new BFA in Art Education program at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), a large, urban public research university on the city’s southwest side. I grew up in Canada, where I completed all of my formal education in the public system, so a mid-career move to join the faculty at a public institution felt familiar, a bit like coming home. I was hired with the understanding that UIC’s previous art education program could be “restarted” by submitting a simple, one-page program change form to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). I filled out the form and sent it to ISBE. The response was swift and unequivocal: too much time had passed since the previous program was suspended in 2010; on behalf of my new institution, I would be required to submit a full proposal to the state licensure board. My experience of writing the proposal was haunted by questions: Is this simply a bureaucratic exercise? Am I just jumping through hoops? Will anyone actually read this thick document? What do these descriptions of learning outcomes have to do with understanding the complexities of professional development and learning to become a teacher? The writing felt disconnected from reality, and yet the end goal of establishing a professional licensure program was entirely dependent on the outcome of this process.

Educational administrators who have worked on program approval or accreditation processes can speak to the confounding nature of the experience. We are asked to map competencies, dispositions, assessments, standards, and learning outcomes, a process of “alignment” that involves making predictable connections between the various metrics. The standardization process, as Clarke and Phelan (2017) argue, “leaves little opportunity for teachers to think for themselves and to practice without an externally imposed end in mind” (p. 38). In recounting what is arguably a mundane, “behind the scenes” story about administrative labor, I aim to highlight conflicts between the external structures and demands of my new role and what I

can now recognize, through an experience of dreaming that I discuss later in the paper, as my own internal, emotional situation of incompleteness. Excited to be in a position to build something new, at the same time, I felt overwhelmed by the anxiety of high stakes and fear of failure. The task before me was at once practical and psychical: in writing the proposal for a new program, I had to make a relation to a reality that I would have preferred not to think about.

Sonu et al. (2020), in this volume, describe this anxious relation as, “the trouble of embodying a sense of self within existing structures” (p. 24). While anxiety can overwhelm and inhibit the capacity to think and to learn, psychoanalytic views of education insist that the work of thinking, “cannot be extricated from the anxiety situation that calls thought forth” (Britzman, 2016, p. 15). The new BFA in Art Education program was approved in December 2017, and the first cohort of students was admitted to the program in fall of 2018. The program is a work in progress, still in the early stages of becoming.¹ While the success of the accreditation process is certainly a positive outcome, this paper will not offer the reader an object lesson in proposal writing. In what follows, I explore the possibility of “other” stories to be told, and the capacity for thought recovered, from these institutional demands and the ways in which we navigate them.

In the paper, the work of program development opens inquiry into the emotional situation of thinking and symbolization necessary for capacious subjectivity in teacher preparation. In the first section, I explore the uses of dream data as symbolizing the uneven, psychical terrain of development in an adjacent scene of professional learning: medical education. Medical education and teacher preparation have in common the wish to equip students with the professional knowledge and skills they will need to intervene in, and possibly even transform, the lives of others. Medical education and teacher preparation also have in common the objective of bringing students into contact with other people in transitional states of human subjectivity and learning. Through a discussion of medical students’ dream-narratives, we will see how vivid descriptions of the psychic life of professional training are useful in conceptualizing the developmental role of dreaming in experiences of learning to become a teacher. Following a discussion of the dream life of professional education, I consider how structures of knowledge and accountability operate defensively in teacher preparation, reinforcing a sense of certainty or “emotional closure” (Clarke & Phelan, 2017) and foreclosing thought. Toward the paper’s conclusion, I work closely with a psychoanalytic view of anxiety, a central feature of development, to suggest how the dream work of teacher preparation opens spaces of symbolic fluency and interpretive play that may deepen and enrich the meaning of professional life.

Dreams as Doing and Undoing

Marcus (2003), in a qualitative study of medical students’ dreams about medical school, suggests how emotional change is prompted in students by the “reality events” of their experience of medical education. Reality events include the major milestones and transition points that students must navigate as they move through the curriculum, beginning in the first year, with a lesson on dissection. On the initial experience of learning how to dissect a human body, Marcus writes, “The cadaver is usually the first dead body the student has seen or handled. It is viewed without psychological preparation” (p. 370). In Marcus’s account, the placement of dissection at the beginning of the curriculum suggests something about the culture, in medical school, of dropping students into the deep end of the swimming pool, so to speak, in order to see how they handle the pressure. From the very beginning, anxiety is animated.²

In Marcus's (2003) study, dream data collected from students in the first year of their medical training depicts a common theme: the students dreamed they were *being* dissected, rather than *doing* the dissecting themselves. In the students' descriptions of their dreams, cadavers are transformed into live patients, students become surgeons, and frightening and invasive procedures are juxtaposed with surgical settings of care. Unsurprisingly, these condensed symbols are coupled with intense emotional activity on the part of the dreamer. According to Marcus, in the students' dissection dreams, "the self-representation of the student-dreamer is full of overwhelming panic, helplessness, and frozen paralysis" (p. 371). Symbolic reversals of position are also evident in the students' dreams; for example, students describe being transformed from medical students—the recipients of medical education—into patients or cadavers. In their dreams, the students' wish to heal others is complicated by their worries about having the power to do harm. The dreams conjure scenes of anxiety over matters of life and death. Will the students' survive their encounter with medical education? In their dreams, the life-saving procedures the students are learning to perform in reality become internalized, personalized, and deeply conflicted.

In Freud's (1914/2001) theory of the dream work, dreams often function as a form of wish fulfillment, giving the dreamer agency over what may, in reality, be unthinkable, unacceptable, or out of reach. For Freud, dreams are a place where the superego, or censor, is relaxed, allowing human conflicts of desire and dependency to emerge under the cover of sleep. In *On Dreams*, Freud (1914/2001) describes the various symbolic mechanisms at work in the dream presentation, which he refers to as, "the peculiar language of the dream" (p. 23). Through the mechanism of condensation, for example, multiple meanings, memories, and references are compressed into a single action or visual element, "linked up," as Freud puts it, "with our impression of the day" (p. 19). The "illogic" of dreams also operates through symbolic transformations, or reversal of one thing into its opposite. Freud writes,

Conceptions which stand in opposition to one another are preferably expressed in dreams by the same element. The dream never utters the *alternative* "either-or," but accepts both as having equal rights in the same connection. When "either-or" is used in the reproduction of dreams, it is ... to be replaced by "*and*." (p. 24, emphasis in original)

The subject of the dream is the divided subject: versions of ourselves that are known and familiar co-exist with parts of ourselves that are difficult to know. For example, in the medical students' dreams, the students appeared as both the object of medical intervention, the vulnerable patient, *and* the subject, the master surgeon at work in the operating theater. The symbolic language of dreams makes room for complexity and uncertainty within the dreamer's relation to reality: the dreamer is freed up, internally, to inhabit multiple positions and feeling-states at the same time. Moreover, there is an emotional sense in which the dreamer is active and doing, while simultaneously feeling vulnerable and undone.

The psychoanalyst Giuseppe Civitarese (2014), in *The Necessary Dream*, offers a useful account of how the understanding of dream life has evolved since Freud's time. Among Freud's major insights is that dreams function as the royal road to the unconscious. In our dreams, our most unacceptable wishes and desires are fulfilled, albeit in concealed or disguised form (Kofman, 1988). According to Civitarese (2014), contemporary psychoanalysts take a different view of dreaming, understanding dream life as fundamentally creative. A dream provides a generative context for using unconscious material to process the meaning of emotional experience. Civitarese writes, "The dream does not hide meaning, but creates it; it does not censor but rather expresses

something new. Dreaming is the function of the mind entrusted with managing the aesthetic experience of the world” (p. 103). From this vantage, dreaming is equivalent to thinking in the most creative sense of the term; as we dream, we learn to live with, and find truth in, the ambiguity and fragility of meaning-making. Ogden (2010) describes contemporary psychoanalysis as, “the era of thinking about thinking” (pp. 317–18), by which he marks a shift in focus from the content of what a person thinks about to the way a person goes about thinking. This sense of thinking as aesthetic activity turns our attention to the psychological art of the dream work, in which the symbolic conditions we create internally form webs of connection that may inhibit or sustain us in our relations with the world outside of ourselves.

The dream data in Marcus’s (2003) study offers glimpses of the “evolving emotional storyline” (p. 368) of students’ changing self-representations within their relation to medical education. Marcus writes,

The dreams ... picture the relationship of the student to the practice of student medicine, to educational experiences and the system of medical pedagogy, and to parts of themselves the students wish but fear to transform. They fear the experience, the method, and the result of medical pedagogy. (p. 372)

As the medical students moved through the middle and later years of their training, their dreams hinted at additional correspondences between the symbolic transformations in their dreams and the reality-events they were experiencing in their medical training program. For example, during the semester when the students were studying pathology (the study of disease within specific body parts), they began to picture *themselves in parts* in their dreams. Things became quite primitive. At the same time as the students were taking courses that focused on specific organs, cells, and systems of the body, they began to complain the curriculum was fragmented and repetitive. Worth noticing in relationship to teacher education is how the medical students’ specific complaints about the curriculum seem to line up with a focus, at that point in their program, on rote memorization and relentless testing. Marcus (2003) writes,

Students now consciously feel the medical curriculum is torturing them. At this time, they can be observed to organize committees to meet with the faculty to try to change the curriculum. They focus on the schedule and the content, but not the process of medical education. (p. 376)

Marcus’s study of the dream work of medical education offers teacher preparation an internal, psychological vocabulary for understanding how we are affected by our professional training and how the structures of curriculum are lived, internalized, and transformed. We might think, for example, of how pre-service students tend to feel impatient with theory, and preoccupied with classroom management, as they move into their clinical training in fieldwork and student teaching.

In the medical students’ dreams, images of body parts symbolized their relation to the curriculum; they experienced the coursework, along with the endless testing for mastery over knowledge, concretely, as a series of fragmented and disjointed parts. The students’ desire to change the schedule and content of the curriculum operated as a defense against thinking as a means to make contact with the internal, emotional situation of medical education. Faced with an overwhelming experience of what they do not yet know or understand, the students looked outside of themselves, and toward the curriculum, as something to be altered or fixed. The “evolving

emotional storyline” (Marcus, 2003, p. 368) of medical education is, thus, a narrative of uneven development (Britzman, 1998, 2012, 2016), at once a story of internal transformation and becoming and a story of how psychological defenses work to protect the vulnerable subject against the pain of integration, the very condition required for thinking about emotional reality. In the next section, while I will not be talking about pre-service students’ dreams, I will look to the conditions and structures of teacher preparation as constitutive of anxiety and defended subjectivity. I consider how external demands for certainty and professional competence meet the internal world of defenses against the vulnerability and sense of incompleteness needed for growth and learning.

(Un)doing Emotional Closure in Teacher Preparation

Teacher educators, those of us who work closely with pre-service students as they move through the structures and milestones of teacher preparation programs, bear witness to the anxiety students feel in the face of seemingly relentless external demands and evaluative measures. Even as they are undergoing profound shifts in self-understanding and internal change, students are expected to demonstrate what they know and what they can do. Clarke and Phelan (2017) characterize the contemporary field of teacher preparation as imbued with, “the tension between settled being and emergent becoming” (p. 4). With Clarke and Phelan, we may begin to imagine ways in which subjectivity, “a restlessness and volatility that is resistant to formulation and codification” (p. 4), develops not in spite of, but *in relation to* demands for linearity and predictable outcomes in teacher preparation.

Over the past two decades, contemporary neo-liberal educational reform movements have capitalized on standardized testing mandates, constructing a deficit narrative regarding the capacity of university-based teacher preparation programs to meet high academic standards and prepare students for entry into a globally competitive workforce. The perception of deficit has resulted in the imposition of professional standards that tie teacher performance to student learning outcomes. In response, education scholars have made the case for teacher preparation as grounded in legitimate forms of scholarly and practical knowledge. In doing so, as Clarke and Phelan (2017) point out, educators have inadvertently been drawn into arguments about quality-assurance, including the orthodoxy that “quality” teaching can function as a panacea for persistent problems of inequality in education.

Discourses of quality-assurance position individual teachers as heroic figures, typically white women who are capable of overcoming what is missing or inadequate within the education system, including the historic and systemic conditions of inequality that shape student success. The irony, as Clarke and Phelan (2017) argue, is that the focus on quality assurance, “only fuels the anxieties of teacher educators and pre-service students with the need to meet certification requirements outlined in the teaching standards supplanting concern with the political and ethical dilemmas of teaching” (p. 3). In the summer and fall of 2020, for example, in the context of the global coronavirus pandemic, teachers were under pressure to return to schools and classrooms in spite of the fact that public schools were ill-equipped to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved. Amidst the crisis, the “heroic teacher” became an essential worker, expected to accept the risk of illness, and possible death, both to ensure that students can learn and that working parents have access to the child care and social services needed to drive the economy.

Although anxiety and uncertainty feature prominently within the culture of teacher preparation programs today, the field of teacher education is imbued with certainty and consensus

regarding professional knowledge—what teachers should know and be able to do. This sense of certainty and consensus structures the learning objectives, standards, and dispositions used to determine pre-service student success. According to Clarke and Phelan (2017), consensus is created by an education system that renders standardization as natural, “as in unmade by humans, inevitable, and *instinctively felt to be right*—and ‘imperative’—as essential, urgent, and authoritative” (p. 38, emphasis added). With the threat of externally imposed objectives in mind, Clarke and Phelan argue, the teacher is reduced to her effects; the actualization of who she must be is based on what she must demonstrate and do.

For Clarke and Phelan (2017), this focus on outcomes and effects is at once a professional imperative—failure to meet expectations can lead to disqualification from the profession—and a form of emotional closure—standardization is *felt to be right*. Paradoxically, the certainties that constitute professional knowledge of teaching leave little space for forms of thinking and intellectual labor made from ambivalence, questioning, and dreaming. With Clarke and Phelan, we might wonder how the relentless focus on actualizing teacher potential, “serves to restrict, rather than enlarge, the subjectivity of the teacher” (p. 6) in teacher preparation programs today. What would it mean to sustain the tension inherent in Clarke and Phelan’s “expanded notion of teacher education” (p. 4) as constitutive of subjects existing in relation to, but expanding beyond, the constraints of institutional structures?

Britzman’s (2016) research on the educational significance of the child psychoanalyst Melanie Klein lends insight into the role of anxiety and symbolization necessary for “undoing” emotional closure in teacher preparation. Klein’s clinical work brings us to an adjacent scene of educational reality, an internal world in which the infant or child’s capacity to ascribe meaning to the world outside of herself is subject to the vicissitudes of her emotional experience. Britzman writes,

The tiny infant too experiences the force of depression: terrors of not knowing, inexplicable situations of mental annihilation, a fall into empty space, and a fear of losing a mind that, at first, cannot grasp the cusp of external reality. And the afterlife of impressive natality proposes that the wishes of education—those that define learning as progressive, reasonable, only conscious, and adaptive to the teacher’s instructions—are vulnerable to the human’s proclivity to love and to hate. (p. 2)

A feature of Kleinian development is the emotional complexity she afforded to the human from the beginning of life. It was Klein’s discovery that, through play, infants and very young children communicate the emotional situation of their internal world of fantasy and object relations, as Britzman (2016) points out, “as a constellation of anxiety, frustration, aggression, and the ego’s mechanisms or functions of defenses that [Klein] thought of as constituting the inner world” (p. 2). In her clinical work with children, Klein was interested in the underside of education’s wish for progress and mastery over knowledge: the pain of integrating emotional reality with the world outside of ourselves and how resistance to thinking about the emotional world led to inhibitions in learning. For Klein, anxiety was both an obstacle to learning and a necessary form of incompleteness, a signal from the archaic reaches of the mind that calls our attention inward, toward the situation of vulnerability that enables thinking about emotional reality.

Britzman’s (2016) study of Kleinian education reminds us that unlike Freud, for whom the dream was the primary object of interpretation in the psychoanalytic clinic, Klein worked closely with children’s play and learning inhibitions as associative objects. As Britzman explains, “Klein

would think of the child's play through the means of representation taken from Freud's understanding of the transformation of thinking in dream life" (p. 45). In her consulting room, Klein observed how children busied themselves with toys, paying particular attention to how they moved between various activities and materials (cutting out paper, experimenting with water, drawing, play-acting, and so on). The materials the children chose, how they made imaginative use of them, and their reasons for changing from one activity to another, were the child's method of dreaming while awake. Klein's free associative method of play opened space for emotive communications between child and analyst, becoming the means to transform the child's expressions of frustration, anxiety, love, and hate, into what Britzman (2016) terms, "the uncertain work of symbolization" (p. 9).

For Klein, knowledge of interiority stirs anxiety not simply because this knowledge is partial and incomplete, but because the work of thinking about the internal world can take on a terrifying literalness. In Marcus's (2003) study of the dreamlife of medical school, medical students' dreams suggest how the external world of curriculum and professional knowledge becomes entangled with the intimate world of object relations. With Britzman's (2016) study of Klein as a resource, we might notice how the "evolving emotional storylines" (Marcus, 2003, p. 368) of the medical students' dreams contain the knowledge of life and death needed for professional training and, moreover, how this internal, emotional situation stirred the medical students' anxiety of not knowing what this knowledge would come to mean. We might see in the medical students' turn toward curriculum as a flawed object a hint of idealization, a form of defense that Britzman (2016) refers to as, "the defense of perfectability" (p. 8). For the medical students, the focus was on improving the curriculum as a means to settle anxiety, master the object, and reassure the vulnerable self. In teacher preparation programs, we might notice how the splitting of theory and practice and the preoccupation with classroom management function as "defenses of perfectability," protecting the pre-service student subject against a worry that, in the face of uncertainty, everything—the self, the classroom, the curriculum—might fall apart.

The move toward thinking about the curriculum as a problem to be fixed or perfected signals students' attempt to master, in the outside world of object relations, the difficulty of the encounter with knowledge on the inside. As Britzman (2016) suggests, symbolization invites an additional move, toward a conceptualization of thinking that stays close to indeterminacy and the play of meaning between what is inside and what is outside. "The problem," as Britzman (2016) puts it, "is how we might transform, along with Klein, inchoate activities of frustration, hate, and love into the poignancy of a forgiving narrative" (p. 9). In such a narrative, the desire to perfect the curriculum would allow for the emotional vulnerability needed for the symbolic work of repair. Britzman continues, "Part of the human condition involves not only being in the world but also crafting an interest in symbolizing its uncertainties and the slow work of self-transformation" (p. 17). Symbolization, a form of thinking with the emotional world, would then become a resource in teacher preparation for necessary processes of learning to tolerate uncertainty and incompleteness, and transforming these painful emotional states into creative forms of expression. Following Marcus (2003), how might our work with becoming teachers engaged in a professional training program create conditions for representing the "evolving emotional storylines" (p. 368) of knowing and not knowing?

Emotional Storylines in Teacher Preparation

In the process of developing a relation to professional knowledge, skills, and competencies, there is always another story being told. Like dreams, these “other stories” contain the complexity and incompleteness needed to function as a resource for symbolization and thinking about emotional reality. I began this paper with one such story of my experience of program development; specifically, the process of writing a proposal for a new undergraduate art teacher preparation program. At the time, I was not fully aware of the overwhelming pressure I felt to write a successful proposal; I can now see my attempt to manage the anxiety as an exercise in Britzman’s (2016) “defense of perfectibility” (p. 8). Writing the proposal involved writing curricula and course descriptions, identifying learning objectives, and aligning these artifacts with state standards and assessment procedures. I fantasized, anxiously, about submitting an incomplete proposal, with gaps in the curriculum or mismatches between learning objectives and assessment rubrics. During those months of proposal writing, preoccupied with what I imagined was missing or incomplete, I wasn’t getting much sleep. Several months after the program was approved, toward the end of the spring semester, I had the following dream.

I am standing in a busy classroom full of middle school students. The windows and doors of the classroom are open, the sun is pouring in, and students are wandering in and out, between the classroom and a grassy yard outside. I am watching the students and wondering if it is ok that they are moving about so freely, in and out of the classroom. I can’t see them when they go outside ... should I be worried that I don’t know exactly where they are? I look over my shoulder where I see a tall, blonde woman wearing a beige skirt and sweater standing in the corner of the room. She looks to be about my age. She is writing something down on a clipboard. I hear myself think, in the dream, “Oh, the evaluation lady is here.” For a brief moment, I wonder if I should do something: Should I bring the students inside? Close the windows and doors? I stand in the middle of the room, doing nothing. And then I wake up.

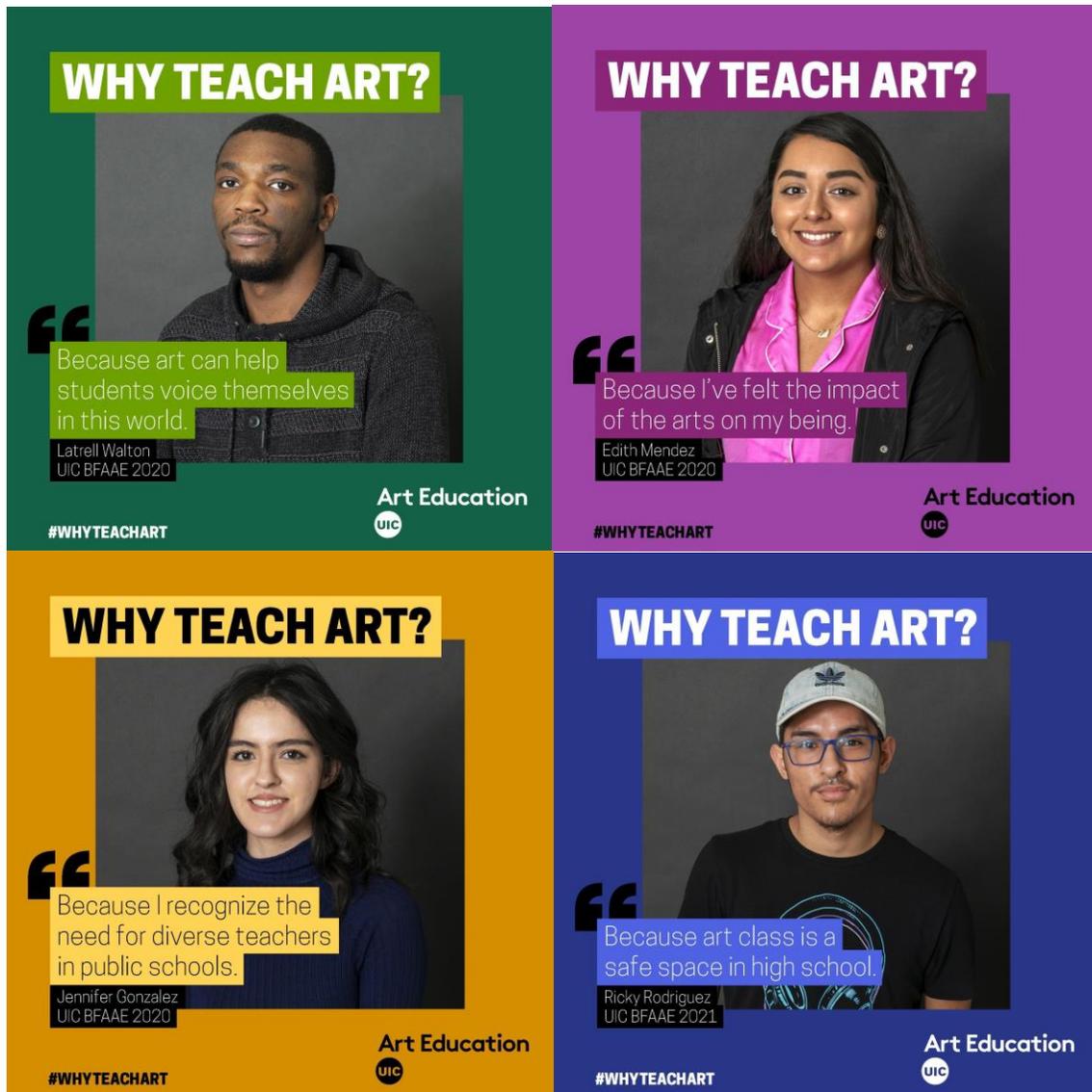
During my first year of teaching in the new program, as the only faculty member working closely with a tiny, inaugural cohort of five students, I had been quietly struggling with how best to introduce a group of young artists to the discourses and demands of teacher preparation without overwhelming them; I worried the program might deaden the creativity that brought the students to art teacher preparation in the first place. An anecdote from the first year of the program is useful in illustrating how my dream of the middle school classroom opened space for the anxiety of incompleteness to become a resource for enlivened engagement.

The students had worked hard to meet the demands of curricular and licensure requirements and to craft, however tentatively, new understandings of themselves in the hybrid, developmental space of pre-service students and future teachers. The end of the semester was close, and a sense of fatigue and depletion was palpable. I wondered if we had run out of things to talk about. Somewhat spontaneously, in class, I decided to share my dream about the middle school classroom, the students wandering in and out, and the evaluation lady. As the students listened, I saw a few raised eyebrows, a few heads slowly nodding. What was this curious dream disclosure? What were they to make of it? Even I wasn’t entirely sure. “I think...” I heard myself say haltingly, “I’m trying to think about our year together, about our program, the one we’re building together. I’m also starting to picture next year, you will be going into student teaching. We’ll be doing that together ... for the first time.” There was a lengthy pause, and then a typically quiet, serious student piped up, “I’m going to be freaking out.” Everyone laughed.

Looking back, I now see this unplanned moment as an example of how symbolization can function in teacher preparation as a method, as Britzman (2016) writes, “of calling forth anxiety to place it into a field of words and then to make something creative from its terrifying scenario affects” (p. 3). In my dream, the reality structures of standardization and evaluation in teacher preparation are represented as part of a complex, symbolic scene: a busy classroom with open doors and windows, where “middle school” students move freely and fluidly between inside and outside. The anxiety of incompleteness has not gone away, as the symbolic presence of an “evaluation lady” suggests. Like the medical students who dream of being on the receiving end of invasive procedures, in my dream I feel a little helpless, a little impotent. I’m not sure what to do. This uncertainty, this “undoing,” made room for an internal shift in waking life; I was able to see the program from a new vantage. The anxiety of proposal writing had been mitigated and transformed, through the aesthetic activity of dreaming, into the possibility of a lively and enlivening classroom exchange.

What would it mean to notice and creatively represent the “evolving emotional storylines” (Marcus, 2003, p. 368) of teacher preparation and professional life? What forms might the dream work of teacher preparation take? While we cannot plan curriculum, teaching, and learning around actual experiences of dreaming, in my view, teacher preparation is a context for finding and creating various forms of dreamlike data: journals, art works, autobiographical narratives, and so on. Such data would open thinking in teacher preparation to what happens when developmental processes of learning meet and refashion narratives of uncertainty and incompleteness into “forgiving narratives” (Britzman, 2016) of emotional and symbolic complexity. Returning to Freud’s (1914/2001) understanding of the dreamwork, in such narratives, the “either-or” thinking of teacher preparation (e.g., success or failure, mastery or inadequacy) would be replaced by the conjunction, “and,” thus, allowing defended and anxious versions of ourselves “equal rights to co-exist” (Freud, 1914/2001, p. 24) with transformative and emergent self-representations.

I can offer one additional example of dreamlike data constituting an “emotional storyline” (Marcus, 2003, p. 368) of becoming in an art teacher preparation program. During my first year of coordinating the new program, student recruitment was on my mind. As I thought about ways to promote the program to future students, I wanted to feature current students, their creativity and accomplishments, while also situating their stories in relation to the art teachers they were working to become. During the program planning process, I had reached out to Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois (GYO, <https://growyourownteachers.org/>), a Chicago-based non-profit organization that works to diversify the teaching profession in the state. A competitive program and vital source of support for pre-service students of color, GYO provides students with mentorship, academic advising, and up to \$25,000 in tuition relief in their lifetimes. In January of 2018, five students in our inaugural class were accepted to this program. The good news led me to a kernel of an idea for a promotional campaign that began with the question, *Why Teach Art?*



Why Teach Art? began as an open-ended investigation in which pre-service student Latrell Walton photographed himself and his peers. The photographs, taken in a professional studio in the Art Department, are reminiscent of annual school “picture day” portraits or high school yearbook photos. Layered with text selected from a teaching philosophy essay the students were writing for class, the students’ facial expressions hint at the emotional complexity and significance of their thoughts, worries, and professional aspirations. While some students reflected on their experiences of art education in high school, both positive and negative, others focused on the current and future role(s) they would play in decolonizing art education and helping to diversify the field of teacher preparation. The final step in the process involved some simple graphic design work in Google Slides, followed by a round of layout and color correction by a staff designer. As the program grows, so does the *Why Teach Art?* archive.

While the archive features individual students and their stories, it does so by evoking the sense in which symbolization and thinking are part of “the slow work” (Britzman, 2016, p. 17) of uneven development and self-transformation in teacher preparation. If we stay close to Ogden’s

(2010) view of dream life as a waking activity, attention to dreamlike data can lead to transformative versions of thinking in which, “one creates a new way of ordering experience that allows one to generate types of feeling, forms of object relatedness, and qualities of aliveness that had previously been unimaginable” (p. 318). Cultivating this version of thinking in teacher preparation would have less to do with tapping into the existing potential of the pre-service student—what they know or what they can do—than with attending to what is tentative and emergent within students’ narratives of self-exploration.

Conclusion

Throughout the paper, I have explored some possibilities for creative agency to be found, and the potential for thought recovered, within painful moments of anxiety and professional uncertainty in teacher preparation. A close reading of dream-narratives written by medical students brought into focus the conditions that inhibit or enliven thinking and emotional complexity in professional spheres of education; in particular, for students who are learning to understand their work as a question of how to think well in relation to other people in transitional states of uncertainty, vulnerability, and change. A persistent problem for teacher preparation is that, amidst the pressure of external demands for certainty and bureaucratic structures of professional accountability, it has become very difficult to think at all. Kelley (2002), writing about the critical role of “freedom dreaming” in the Black radical imagination, describes the conditions that inhibit thinking and creativity within movements for social change:

Sometimes I think the conditions of daily life, of everyday oppressions, or survival, not to mention the temporary pleasures accessible to most of us, render much of our imaginations inert. We are constantly putting out fires, responding to emergencies, finding temporary refuge, all of which make it difficult to see anything other than the present. (p. 10)

For Kelley (2002), “freedom dreaming” acts as a symbolic refuge from the demands of external reality, making space for the languages of art and poetry to help us, “envision a different way of seeing, perhaps a different way of feeling” (p. 11). In the context of teacher preparation, I am interested in how the aesthetic activities of dreamwork become a refuge from *and* a vital resource for navigating the everyday work of understanding—within the nexus of our imaginative, institutional, and evaluative structures—how anxiety is produced and transformed into possibilities for revitalizing the meaning of professional life.

Kelley’s (2002) depiction of the everyday conditions that inhibit imagination resonates with my experience of feeling overwhelmed by the reality structures and demands of teacher preparation during the process of planning a new program. In my dream, I stand at the center of a bustling, beautiful classroom full of sunlight and freedom of movement. There are no fires to put out, no problems to be fixed, nothing to perfect. The “evaluation lady” has receded into the background, allowing anxiety to be dispersed and making room for uncertainty and symbolic fluency within the emotional situation of the dream. There are parts of the scene that I am unable to know: What are the “middle school” students up to as they move in and out of the classroom? Where do they go when I can’t see them? Perhaps the students’ movement in the dream can be interpreted as symbolizing incompleteness as a provisional, but emotionally enlivening, space of meaning-making between external structures and internal, emotional realities. While the anxiety I

felt in doing nothing, so palpable in the dream, threatened to undo the beautiful scene, a dream of doing nothing made way for a return to waking life, and to my work, with something more to work with.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Anne Becker, Christopher Bernu, Aginah Muhammad, and Jennifer Olsen for their support and wisdom during the proposal writing process.
2. A unique course entitled, “Thriving in Residency” (<https://www.thrivinginresidency.com/>) designed by psychotherapist and psychoanalyst in training Ramya Iyer, addresses the emotional situation of medical training. Iyer (2020) writes, “I found residents to be high functioning and capable but they had little support and were often burned out. Though the need for therapy was there, they didn’t have an easy time accessing or sustaining treatment.”

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