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## Childhood and Education: Unconscious Aspects of Educational Relationships

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**Abstract:** Based on the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis, this study presents a discussion concerning the presence of the unconscious in educational and pedagogical relationships and practices established between a teacher and a child in early childhood education. We propose to discuss the importance of another human being, specifically the teacher, to the child's formative process. The complexity of the educational experience brings into question the recognition that teacher and child are both desiring subjects and also the recognition that the teacher, being a significant human being to the child, is co-responsible for his/her humanization process.

**Keywords:** preschool students, preschool teachers, education, psychoanalysis

## Infância e Educação Infantil: Aspectos Inconscientes das Relações Educativas

**Resumo:** Este estudo teve como objetivo discutir a presença do inconsciente nas relações e práticas educativo-pedagógicas constituídas entre professor e criança na Educação Infantil a partir do referencial teórico psicanalítico. Propõe-se a problematização sobre a importância do outro humano, mais propriamente o professor, no processo formativo da criança. A complexidade da experiência educativa coloca em questão, de um lado, o reconhecimento de que professor e criança são sujeitos desejantes, e, de outro, o reconhecimento de que o professor, como outro humano significativo para a criança, é corresponsável pelo processo de humanização do aluno.

**Palavras-chave:** pré-escolares, professores de pré-escola, educação, psicanálise

## Infancia y Educación Infantil: Aspectos Inconscientes de las Relaciones Educativas

**Resumen:** La finalidad de este estudio es discutir la presencia del Inconsciente en las relaciones y prácticas educativo-pedagógicas establecidas entre el profesor y el niño, en la Educación Infantil, partiendo del aporte teórico de la Psicoanálisis. Se propone el cuestionamiento sobre la importancia del otro humano, sobretodo del profesor, para el proceso de formación del niño. La complejidad de la experiencia educativa pone en discusión, a un lado, el reconocimiento de que el profesor y el niño son sujetos que desean y, de otro lado, el reconocimiento de que el profesor, como un otro humano significativo para el niño, es co-responsable por el proceso de humanización del alumno.

**Palabras clave:** pre escolares, profesores pre escolares, educación, psicoanálisis

It is known that to educate necessarily involves working with and among people. It is a relational, interactive activity, in which desires, interests and needs of another, i.e. the son/daughter, the child, the student, are present. In this sense, school education, especially Early Childhood Education, relies basically on the quotidian interactions between teachers and children, without which the school is nothing more than an empty shell (Tardif & Lessard, 2007), lifeless, motionless and without action. Unlike other professions where the work object is inert and responds rapidly to the action of the worker, in education, elements are involved that are related to the human, these being of the social, cognitive and psychic order, which are not controllable in the same way as inert material. In other words, the teacher exerts his direct action on another human, a child, with a view to forming the individual for life in society. This involves incorporating values, behavior, concepts, and finally, knowledge, which enables

the child to be constituted as the subject within a determined sociocultural context. The contrast lies in the fact that children are not inert matter, i.e. they react to the action of the teacher, bringing desires and demands to the scene that may collide with the desires and demands of the teacher. Children may present empathy or antipathy to the actions and to the figure of the teacher, considering that he is the target of the child's emotional investment. Educational work requires situations of negotiation, control, persuasion, seduction and promise. In the same way, we can say that the teacher is also affected by the child, due to the simple fact that work about and with human beings gives the teacher back the humanity of his object. The teacher is faced with his own humanity mirrored in the child that is in front of him. The supposed neutrality of the teacher regarding the relationships and the educational and pedagogical practices dismantles itself before the inevitable reality of his humanity.

Considering that "to teach is to work with human beings, about human beings and for human beings", it can be said that the "human object" is at the center of teaching work (Tardif & Lessard, 2007, p. 31). Thus, given the magnitude of such an affirmation, this study aimed to discuss the presence of the unconscious in the educational and pedagogical

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relationships and practices established between teacher and child in Early Childhood Education, according to the psychoanalytical theoretical framework. The Freudian revolution inverts the absolute value of reason and inaugurates a time in which reason and conscience are reductions of the unconscious. The I, therefore, has relative, rather than absolute, power. Psychoanalysis demonstrates the workings of the unconscious as the central activity of human productions. Freud's legacy leads us to discover the workings of the unconscious, the modes of expression and inscription of life and death in the body and in the human doings. In this sense, Freud showed that rational life is a conquest, an agreement with the passions, with the drives, and not their exclusion.

This condition assumes the recognition that education is a "process that is not limited to conscious intentionality" (Oliveira, 2006a, p. 13). This means recognizing and considering the impossibility of separating education "from its unconscious meaning", since this "is co-agent and co-producer of human doings" (Alves, 2009, p. 71), which are codetermined by the desire, by the infantile and by the fantasy. Considering that the human being is "a being of desire, rather than of necessity", it is essential to recognize that "to educate, to think and to learn are activities invested with fantasy" (Oliveira, 2006b, p. 86). It is noteworthy that education, sustained by the knowledge accumulated by the psychoanalysis since Freud, is beyond what is objectively perceived, beyond the objective knowledge that comprises the set of school content transmitted to the children. Rather, it is made by what the other, the teacher, represents to the subject in constitution, the child, being performed in the recognition that the human is a being who desires and is constituted in the loving relationship that is established between teacher and child.

### **The Teacher: Object of Desire for the Child**

In *Some Reflections on Schoolboy Psychology*, Freud (1914/1968a) discourses about the importance of the teacher in the educational relationships and practices, since the teacher has more value for what he is and represents to the child than the actual legacy of knowledge that he transmits. When talking about his reunion with an old school teacher, Freud argues that it is difficult to say which exerted more influence on him and his (school) colleagues, the interest in the sciences they were taught or the personalities of their teachers. Conversely, Freud affirms that concern about the personality of the teachers constituted a constant and hidden undercurrent in him and his colleagues, so that, for many, the pathways of the sciences were passed to them only through their teachers. This concerns what the teacher represents from the unconscious point of view of the child and vice versa.

Thus, Freud says:

We courted them or turned our backs on them, we imagined sympathies and antipathies in them which probably had no existence, we studied their

characters and on theirs we formed or misformed our own. They called up our fiercest opposition and forced us to complete submission; we peered into their little weaknesses, and took pride in their excellences, their knowledge and their justice. At bottom we felt a great affection for them if they gave us any ground for it (...) We were from the very first equally inclined to love and to hate them, to criticize and respect them (Freud, 1914/1968a, p. 170).

The ideas of Freud (1914/1968a), highlighted in this text, lead us to think about the reasons that make the child fall in love with knowledge. Certainly they are beyond the knowledge itself. This is the result of the loving employment of sexuality on non-sexual targets/objects, the transition from auto-erotic pleasure to sublimated pleasure.

However, the passion that leads the child to walk this path is associated with the figure of the teacher, the child's object of desire. The children trust the teacher with their love and desire, because they believe they can help the teacher find the answers to their riddles. The teacher has to welcome the desire of the child and the love directed toward him, supporting the drives and helping to support the unsuccessful attempts of entering the civilized world.

Barone (1995) highlights the problematic nature of the transmission of knowledge, being one that permeates the relationship between mother and child or between teacher and child, since what is transmitted is always beyond the discourse offered, beyond the intention of the speaker. The author emphasizes that the relationship that the teacher establishes with the child is a relationship of inequality, marking a difference of experience. The teacher is in the position of the one that should perform an educational action with the children, leading them toward autonomy and supporting them so that they recognize themselves as units within a community in which they should learn to live.

The knowledge of his desires and egoic integration are fundamental elements for the teacher to work with the child. This knowledge of himself marks the difference between the teachers who are positioned as mediators between the child and the cultural productions, and those who, identifying themselves with the knowledge that they hold, assume an authoritarian and dogmatic stance and rejects the cultural productions and the ideas of the students when they differ from their own (Barone, 1995).

Conversely, there are those teachers who, as Barone points out (1995), forge a "false equality", denying the obvious and clear difference between them and the child, as pernicious as the substantiation of the difference, since this encourages the undercover use of authority. The accentuation of the difference in relation to the children, as well as the attempt to match them, on behalf of the teacher, are postures that seek to maintain the dependent child, while maintaining the teacher in the illusory position of omnipotence, satisfying his narcissistic tendencies.

The issue here, at least in the proposals of Barone, is to give children the chance to be autonomous, to free themselves from the oppressive love, in this case, of the teacher. In other words, what appears to be difficult for the teacher is to let the children express themselves, free themselves, have their own ideas, often contrary to those of the teacher. Using the appropriate term by Winnicott (1971/1975, 1964/1997), what seems difficult is the “weaning” of the child by the teacher: the child wants autonomy, the teacher makes this difficult. According to Barone (1995), learning - and, more broadly, the educational practice - goes through a phase of identification, however, should go further. In the relationship between teacher and child, as in all human relationships, identifications come into play that organize the relationships of the subject with the various instances that constitute the psychic apparatus.

The earliest expression of an identification, says Freud (1921/1968b) in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, is the emotional bond experienced by the child in relation to the parental figures, which is later transferred to other persons with whom the child relates, provided they are representative for them. For the child these people will be “substitute figures for these first objects of his feelings [...] can be classified from his point of view according as they are derived from what we call the ‘imagos’ of his father, his mother, his brothers and sisters, and so on”. (Freud, 1914/1968a, p. 171).

This is also the case for the teacher, taken as a model by the child, because the teacher is taken (unconsciously) as a substitute for the child’s parents. For Freud (1914/1968a, p. 172), “these men, not all of whom were in fact fathers themselves, became our substitute fathers” in the way that “we transferred on to them the respect and expectations attaching to the omniscient father of our childhood, and we then began to treat them as we treated our fathers at home”.

Therefore, the children invest the teacher as an ideal - the ego ideal - in the same way that they used to (or do) invest their parents. The children say: ‘When I grow up I want to be like my father’, ‘like my teacher’ and so on. It is an ideal of perfection placed on the parents and other adults representative to them that is slowly being undermined by the real: they are not so perfect. However, such identifications allow the subjects to constitute and differentiate themselves (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1982/2001), making them independent.

The issue is that the teacher tends to support only the first phase, i.e. that of identification, rejecting the second, which would refer to autonomy, says Barone (1995). The child, by taking the teacher as a model, narcissistically gratifies him, which becomes bearable, while the movement toward autonomy of this child may be perceived by the teacher as an attack or repudiation of his role, undermining his self-image. In this case, the teacher tends to be authoritarian, disqualifying the children and their cultural productions. Taking advantage of the power that the position gives, tends to obstruct or impede the autonomy of the thinking of the child (Barone, 1995).

Clearly, the relationship of the adult (teacher) with the child is unequal. However, this does not mean that the teacher cannot accept what the child produces, which can be valuable and enriching in the relationships and educational and pedagogical practices. Barone (1995, p. 63), supported by Ferenczi (1932/1992), said that “it is the importance of listening to the child in order to help the child to express itself and be able to learn from the child”. Lajonquière (1999) says that the act of educating means transmitting symbolic marks that allow the children to earn themselves a place in history, where they can be allowed the use of desire.

Thus, Lajonquière (1992) argues that education goes beyond the pedagogic methods, where the secret, so to speak, of the act of educating, is in the Other. According to the author, no subjective production or product of human activity can be thought of as happening outside the field of the Other. Learning and the (re)construction of socially shared knowledge become possible within this field. Lajonquière (1999) argues that what ‘touches’ the children is not the knowledge itself, but the one that addresses them, the teacher, as Freud highlights (1914/1968a) in *Some Reflections on Schoolboy Psychology*. Thus, Lajonquière (1999, p. 123) said that:

When we teach something to a child, on one side, we put into action our phantasmatic, that is, the initiative of the act is the responsibility of the desire of the adult occupying the educational function. On the other side, we transmit an operative logic that transcends the phantasmatic field within which we are singularly taken as desiring subjects, since it is a piece of the culture, a universal, a social bond fragment. In short, to the extent that the child learns/apprehends, the sample of the transmitted bond makes a bond that subjects the child.

While the children construct a social bond, they have the ability to recognize themselves in the other, to recognize that the other carries similar marks to their own, to the extent that they join an existential tradition, the fragments of the culture. It is a passage between to be and to have, between the position of object of desire and that of subject that desires. Lajonquière (1999) points out that every act of education transmits culture/knowledge, as well as a set of existential knowledge. When children are presented with knowledge mediated by the teacher, they carry with them a dose of existence, a quota of knowing what to do with life, an identifying trait captured in their ‘master’.

In this context, Lajonquière (1992) calls into question the relationship between culture/knowledge and knowing (regarding the desire), indicating that the Order of knowledge or of desire is crucial, i.e. the relationship of the desire with the culture/knowledge is a relationship of determination of the former over the latter. In anyway, these two Orders are irreducible one to the other: the intelligence produces knowledge and the desire produces knowing. Both together form thought.

In other words, thought is the product of the inter-relationship between intelligence and desire, between knowledge and knowing. Therefore, according to Lajonquière, to think about the (re)construction of knowledge only from the cognitive perspective, i.e. of the intelligence, is a mistake.

Within the work of Lajonquière on the vicissitudes of learning, the following discussion is presented: the (re)construction of the knowledge from the psychoanalytic point of view is a function of the subjective position of the child in relation to castration and not as a function of the empirical data provided by the senses. Consequently, learning is also placed in terms of its position, as a function of castration. For this author, learning has a result thanks to the presence of another (Lajonquière, 1992, p. 183). The two operators involved in this net are the mirror stage and the Oedipus complex, which enable the subject to construct himself and recognize himself as One.

Castration is made possible due to the entry of the father into the Oedipal scene, which cuts the child's incestuous bond with his mother, moving from the phallic position - the object of desire of the mother - and becoming the subject of desire (Bacha, 2003). Child and mother assume, by virtue of castration, their status as lacking subjects. With this, the identification of the child with the phallus breaks down and a difference is established (which can be recognized) between the child Being the phallus and Having that which can imaginatively provide what is lacking: "instead of wanting 'to be' the phallus, the child will desire to 'have' money, gifts, etc." (Bacha, 2003, p. 136). Castration also separates To be and To appear to be: introduces a difference "there where the subject believed to be when it only appears to be" (Lajonquière, 1992, p. 214-215).

If the presence of an Other is essential for learning, as stated by Lajonquière (1992), it seems reasonable to think that the triggering or inhibition of the (re)construction of knowledge depends, in the first instance, on the position taken by the teacher before the child and, consequently, on the desire that animates the act of educating. According to the author, the educative demand that is directed toward the teacher should leave an 'empty' place - by means of castration - that allows the production of a symptom of structure - the learning itself - and does not require from the child the incarnation of the ideals that animate the act, such as those dictated by the school demand, making the child a victim "of a certain pedagogical tractor that can condemn her to intellectual inhibition or to repetition (...) of the school curriculum" (Lajonquière, 1999, p. 23-24).

### **About the Passion to Educate**

Assis and Oliveira (2003) highlighted that the teacher educates through what he is and despite what he is, strengthening the idea that learning is done with another, in addition to the teaching methods and techniques so valued by the teachers and the initial and continuing training courses.

Despite the importance that these methods and techniques assume for the teaching and learning process, one can not reduce the educational process to them, since this is the result of inter-relationships that promote knowledge and self-knowledge.

From this principle, education is detached from a teaching technique or pedagogic method capable of universalization, offered to all children in a comprehensive and equal way. Education is postulated in the sphere of human relationships, with an artisanal character, considering that it is a human technique, a calling that, according to Freud (1932/1981), contemplates the recognition of the constitutional individuality of the children and the consequent need to infer, from small clues, what is going on with them, giving them love, while maintaining authority.

In relation to early childhood education, it can be said that this is not grounded in the teaching methodologies or techniques, which are often re-edited, but always with universalizing characteristics. The nodal point is anchored in the recognition of the operability of the unconscious and in the psychosexuality as a motor of human development (Sommerhalder, 2010).

The announcement made by Freud regarding the role of the teacher as another human in the educational relationship follows transferential logic. The teacher, because he is constructed as another in this intersubjective relationship, signals his fundamental role in the educational process of the child, a role that is established by the countless ways of dealing with the libido and transforming it. Libido is defined in the Freudian work as the person's own sexuality, Eros or the active energy of the psychic apparatus manifested since childhood. The libido supports the inscription of the drives in the universe of symbolization. Therefore, it is a process of affecting and being affected by the child.

To educate is not, in this dynamic, to give full freedom to the satisfaction of the drives, nor to repress them in their totality, seeking the (impossible) termination or the non-manifestation of them, but rather to promote the displacement of the libido, reordering it for creative and investigative purposes and for knowledge production, taking advantage of the energy of Eros to promote creative experiences. In this ground, to educate is to help children learn to master their instincts and sublimate them or direct them towards purposes of cultural value, through their inclusion in the experience and culture. This consists of promoting ways of redirecting the libido, refocusing it on more valuable purposes. It is the human art of transforming Eros in the creative process and Thanatos in the constructive process. This marks Early Childhood Education as a singularized and not a universalizing practice, as proposed in the arsenal of teaching methods.

This view of the educational relationship admits the magnitude of the existence of subjectivity in the school education of the child, which unfolds, for example, in the many ways the child appropriates the knowledge or reacts to it, with the teacher, therefore, not working from the universal

discourses, such as “*all* children like...” or “*all* children need...”, but recognizing the existence and the manifestation of the psychological life in each child, individualizing this educational relationship.

For Oliveira (2006a), educational work is a process of construction of the human and consists of taking the drives as the potential to construct or destroy, substituting or transforming these drives, not into erotic or aggressive discharges, but into significant constructions for the individual and collective life. This finding alludes to a preponderant role of the teacher in the educational relationship.

The learning and the love (Eros) are found to be involved: learning is based on Eros and, as a link or construction, serves the life drive. Love, from the comprehension of Freud, is the main driving force of education, due to the demand for love that the child directs toward the parents and later the teachers. Kupfer (2008) demonstrates that, besides the transference from the student to the teacher, i.e. the re-edition of the experiences with the parents, who are reactualized by the child in the teacher-child relationship, there is the transference from the teacher to the child. According to the author, this formulation needs to be performed due to the one who speaks also being the one who transfers.

The teacher, when speaking freely, is subject to the formations of the unconscious, to the abrupt appearance of the desire, that is, the phenomena of the transfer are present in the educational relationship with the child. As with a child, when talking or writing, this is performed based on the phenomenon of transference. Regarding the transferential relationship, Kupfer affirms: “(...) the fact that there is a relationship between one subject and another under certain conditions is what ensure learning” (p. 45). The author further states that, when a subject speaks with the other, whether the teacher with the child, or in another situation, there is always a more prominent imaginary relationship and a symbolic relationship. The imaginary relationship is one that has as its pattern the primitive relationship between the baby and the mother, is dual and narcissistic, as it assumes a relationship of seduction for both and positions the other in the place of lacking, as the one who will complete this absence.

The lack is responsible for the establishment of desire, but it is irremovable, therefore, it is also a relationship marked by illusion. With this, the baby has to deal with the situation that it does not complete its mother, because a third is inserted in this field, such as the father, the work, the study or another symbol that promotes a separation between the baby and the mother. This situation creates distress, while at the same time, an illusion that the dual relationship is complete, and, therefore, it is a relationship of seduction. For Kupfer (2008, p. 45), “another name for this type of relationship is a loving relationship, (...) a prototype of what the future loving relationships will be (...)”. The loving relationship that starts between the baby and mother will also be responsible for the construction of the subjectivity in the baby, which is consolidated by the requirement for recognition in this relationship with the other.

This first relationship will be the basis for the other relationships that are presented in the quotidian, such as the teacher-child relationship, which primarily solicits the other to complete it, with love being the structure of the relationship with the other. However, in the educational relationship, the interdiction is established by the desire to know, which is the third in the relationship between the teacher and the child. The desire to know unfolds in the way the teacher relates to knowledge, in the special manner as the object of the knowledge complements his lack. The teacher is not teaching the knowledge, “(...) but the way the human relates to the knowledge, and the place it has, that the knowledge has in the libidinal economy of each one” (Kupfer, 2008, p. 58). Thus, from the manner that this object of knowledge was presented to the children by the teacher, from the desiring way with which the teacher relates to it, the children are captivated to also relate to this knowledge and combine it, in their way, with others, with their experiences, constructing new knowledge, with their own styles.

It is necessary that the child learns to take the object of knowledge as an object of desire, and the way the teacher relates to and presents this knowledge is fundamental in the learning. The educational relationship must include desire (unconscious) that moves, that mobilizes the child for the knowledge, which establishes the order of learning (Kupfer, 2008). Eros is the inseparable companion of knowledge (Oliveira, 2006a). When trying to (un)eroticize learning, there is an illusion in the school education, believing in the supposed aseptic nature of the knowledge domain.

Silva (1994, 2003), when researching ‘the passion to teach’ in very successful teachers who were satisfied with their jobs, was faced with the passionate teacher. For this author, the passion to teach is characterized by a psychological movement that is maintained internally, despite the external vicissitudes, and that allows the efficacy of the transmission and production of the culture, the construction of the knowledge and the development of the other human (the child). This is a relationship of delivery, with the teacher giving the child the best of everything he has, delivering his knowledge and allowing the birth of a loving relationship for the sharing of this knowledge.

Silva (1994) explains that it is in this loving relationship between teacher and child that the passion of teaching is created. Passion is conceived as a product of infantile desires that are rationally and lovingly actualized at the time of the class; “it is an alive and developed passion that becomes manifested when teaching” (p. 109), producing a highly creative educational practice for both the teacher and the student. Passionate teachers create for themselves, each in their own way, free and creative pedagogy, distant from methodological and molding ties. This is a passionate encounter in which to be and to stay in love consists of a psychic state of being in love that, even faced with all the external vicissitudes, remains alive, performing the sharing of knowledge and desires.

For Silva (1994, p. 110):

The passionate teacher is one who is able to surrender the students and lose them in the development of their own ideas and thoughts. It is the teacher that can feel pleasure in the differences, in the divergence of ideas and can live with them, love them and be transformed by them. Living a reciprocal relationship. (...) This individual is capable of loving the other considering their differences, is capable of losing the other as a disciple and as a self extension, and gaining the other as a thinking and independent colleague. At the same time there is the ability to recognize the dependence upon the formative relationship, which occurs because the other is important for the dialogue, for the knowledge, for coordinating ideas, one being the interlocutor of the other.

Jerusalinsky (1994) points out that the teacher has to transmit the social demand, providing a basis in addition to his desire, because there is no way to know the unconscious repercussions of the teachings of the teacher, or the repercussions of his personal style, which affect the children. This evokes the following statement: children learn not only from their interaction with the objects of culture that are presented by the teacher, but also in terms of what is potentiated by unconscious questions that are beyond the scope and control of the teacher. Under this dynamic, the teaching methods or the pedagogical techniques represent only a complement.

Drawing on Melanie Klein, Silva (1994) says that the passion to teach is triggered by a repair mechanism, i.e. the restoration and recreation of the object loved, introjected, and attacked by the destructive drives. It presumes the victory of the life drives over the death drives. The desire to restore and recreate is the basis of the sublimation and the creativity. Thus, the educational-pedagogic practice of the teacher would be an activity of continuous repair and, at the same time, of creation, in which hate would become mitigated by love (Silva, 1994). Silva (1994) assumes that the psychic movement that mobilizes the passion to teach is, therefore, "to seek an attempt of infinite repair": the passionate teacher is the one who is able to "carry out the restoration of the internal objects, in an inexhaustible richness, in which guilt and destruction are shown on the other side", i.e. the side of life, of love (p. 112).

According to Silva (2003), the teachers who participated in his research on the origins of the passion to teach said the mediators and/or facilitators of the teaching process give a higher relevance to the relationship established in the formative process rather than to the content transmitted:

With different forms of language, but with the same meaning, says that to teach is to lead the students to find their own way, to transform themselves, to evolve, to reflect, to move, to relate. In the process, the teacher puts himself as someone also being formed, moving, transforming, evolving, relating, with meaningful and enriching exchanges (Silva, 2003, p. 102).

From this same perspective, Silva observed in the pedagogical work of these teachers their character of constant transformation, and the creativity component as a part of the resources to be used by them in each class. The classes were dynamic, in constant movement of change, which "(...) is characterized as a movement that provides the way, which opens the path" (2003, p. 103).

It could be said that, in the passionate teacher, the ability to mobilize fantasies, to create and invent is that which feeds the educational act and that permits the other (the child) to mobilize for this type of "transitional space" (Winnicott, 1971/1975) that configures itself in the relationship of the teacher with the child, and that produces knowledge. Here is the secret of the color of the relationships and educational-pedagogical practices, as they are transformed into a kind of game or theater, a playful, creative moment in the sense of being transformed and transforming the child. It is an exciting, challenging, questioning moment, which moves the creative and constructive thinking.

Silva (2003), corroborating the ideas of Winnicott (1971/1975), affirmed that it is at the time of the educational-pedagogical practice with the child that the teacher finds the source of play within himself; this source is inherent to him and if, on one hand, it is independent of the other, it is in the encounter with the child that this source will be presented. It is in the educational-pedagogical relationship that the teacher is confronted with his need to mobilize this child. This is where the teacher may or may not have the resources to make something passionate of this situation. When this atmosphere is achieved by the teacher it will be transmitted to the children, who engage themselves, perhaps, identifying the "drive to know" (Silva, 2003).

According to the elaborations of Silva, to play represents the ability to mobilize the fantasies that drive the subjects to share themselves with the other, so that it allows the production of meaningful knowledge. Therefore, the passion to train can be described as the realization of unconscious infantile desires, in which aggressive and loving elements are combined to produce and permit the emergence of significant creations and knowledge (Oliveira, 2006a).

The teacher will be able to help the formation of the child, facilitating, leaving to appear and developing the potentiality for the exercise of creative thinking. To think creatively, rather than to dominate the unconscious, is to master that which resists objectification, says Oliveira (2006a). Therefore, the importance that education in childhood is taken as a process, "a human technique of permeability between the psychic and material reality", transforming that which resists from the opponent (the unconscious) into the ally (Oliveira, 2006a, p. 97).

Bacha (2003) points out, from the propositions of Winnicott, that to be creative is to have the ability to use objects, to use creatively what the culture offers, including the teacher. The author suggests that the teacher, rather than proposing games, lets himself be used as an object, "giving

himself up (that is, his teachings) to the role of game, of object of use, in the same way that the ‘sufficiently good mother’ allows the creation of this space that unites and divides” (pp. 197-198).

Oliveira (2006a) emphasizes that the teacher, as well as the ‘sufficiently good mother’, as proposed by Winnicott (1971/1975), can also provide the children with the sense of who they are, allowing the child’s taste for knowledge to manifest itself. Education in this perspective, means the construction of knowledge and self-knowledge, *per via de levare*, i.e. “the task of education – through the analogy with psychoanalysis – can be thought of as a work of a sculptor”, such as one who “gives form to the search and brings it out” (Oliveira, 2006a, p. 93). Emerique (2004) suggests, in this sense, that the teacher should allow himself to experience the play, to interact with the children, to travel with them in his imagination, to question what they desire to play, allowing the production of culture by the child, thus, recovering the erotic and fertilizing dimension that emerges in the play.

### Final Considerations

‘Do we educate a child?’. It is with this question that Calligaris (1994) entitles one of his publications. But what motivates the formulation of such a question? This can be crafted from the rumors that echo from the halls of educational institutions for children, which culminate in an idealistic (and pedagogic) education proposed for the children, based on rational logic.

Assis and Oliveira (2003) highlight that we are in a period of crisis, oscillating between the blind transmission of old patterns and the drastic rupture of the traditions, a period of fragmentation. It is at this boundary that contemporary society searches for instant gratification, in which there is the exacerbation of competitiveness, the bombardment of technological transformations, the devaluation of the person and the disposable and consumerist character of social bonds.

Schlesener (2011) points out, from the reflection on the writings of Walter Benjamin, that to try to understand the childhood experience requires us to question those forms of education of the child that are based on individualism and on the structure of the mode of capitalist production. Benjamin strengthens the idea that society (capitalist) recognizes children as objects and disregards their status as thinking subjects, also determining that it is necessary to adapt them to the adult world. However, while the child knows the world with sensitivity, with the activity of the fantasy, the adult rationalizes, orders and controls. Amid this confusion of languages, the school, immersed in a capitalist society that values the product, seeks to transform the child into a rational and epistemic subject, isolating the drives (Bacha, 2002).

Without knowing that education essentially involves unconscious identifications, the value of fantasy for learning and knowledge construction is disregarded, as is the value of fantasy for the thought processes (investigative curiosity,

desire for knowledge, creativity), especially when it comes to the education of children in institutions such as daycare centers and preschools.

As highlighted throughout this study, education (school or otherwise) is always a process mediated by another human. Therefore, the simple acts of changing diapers, feeding or keeping the baby and the child warm are not neutral or aseptic, even though the hygienist discourse has been present for several decades in early childhood school education. The teacher, understood as another human, plays a fundamental role in the formation of the child, because, the act of cleaning, feeding or keeping the baby and the child warm, is also promoting investments addressed to them, which are fundamental to the process of emotional maturation. The objects of culture or what is offered to the child are received from the place and the way *the other* offers them (Lajonquière, 1995).

The teacher enrolls the child in the culture, in the social bond and situates the child in relation to the codes and the law, which organize the social, positioning as a partner in this endeavor of humanization of the child. The teacher is a person of influence to the child and the child should feel influenced by the things that are presented. This considers the mobilization of humanizing experiences, collaborating, thus, with the process of emotional maturation and the consequent conquest, on behalf of the child, of its own independence.

The teacher will be, from this perspective, the provider of a basis for the children to feel safe to establish contacts with the world. There is also a need to know how to deal with their fluctuation of moments of dependence and independence, giving them the wealth of the relationships between the internal and external reality and, thus, with the culture. These considerations prompt a (re)signification of the comprehension of education/care, understanding it from the background of a loving relationship.

As a person of reference, the teacher occupies a subjective position in relation to the child, recognizing that learning is possible due to the other person being the founder of the subject (Oliveira, 2006a). The intersubjective nature of the educational process calls for reflection on the need to value the role of the teacher of Early Childhood Education. This individual is not simply a teacher organizer of the social conditions and situations appropriate for the child to interact with people, with culture and with its objects of knowledge. In the early childhood school education, the way this professional nurtures, accepts, rejects, invests or neglects the vicissitudes that the baby and the child face and describe under the various forms and languages, strengthens or weakens the construction and preservation of the self. More than enlisting guidance on the behavior of the teacher, there is a need to discuss and consider the value of the education/care as belonging to a space that inaugurates the constitution of the subject, the intersubjectivity and, therefore, the emotional development of the human.

The fact that they comprehend that the teaching practice is not neutralized by the psychic dynamism does not



imply the profession of the teacher becoming more complicated and more difficult. According to Oliveira (2008, p. 9): “it is the welcoming of the complexity of the educational experience opening space for the presence of the desiring life, dealing with the pain and delight of being an educator, this calling being involved in the formation of another and a culture”.

The complexity of the formative process and specificity of Early Childhood Education require a reconsideration of the educational practice, recognizing the presence, in this process, of the subjectivity of the subjects involved (teacher and children). A broader comprehension of the formative process in Early Childhood Education indicates that the management of quotidian situations depends on the binomial professional formation-identity of the teacher, as well as the recognition of the value and implications of the teaching actions in the construction of the subjectivity of the child. One challenge that is established along this teaching pathway is to make it possible for the teacher to be the author of his practice, constructing an authentic pathway, much more moved by his sensitivity and by his soul, than by the pedagogical certainties already consolidated and offered to him.

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