

## On Use: Art Education and Psychoanalysis

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### Abstract:

In this article the author uses a key moment in Michael Fried's essay 'Art and Objecthood' - Fried's reference to Tony Smith's car ride on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike with his Masters of Fine Art students - to think about the possibilities offered to art education by psychoanalysis. In considering Smith's experience and Fried's interpretation of it as instances of both pedagogy and Winnicottian 'use', the author allows this analogy to echo and expand throughout three different pedagogical moments in which she has put 'Art and Objecthood' to use within her teaching and back through to Sigmund Freud's notion of 'after-education'. In this article, she asks: How have I used Fried's text? How, in turn, do art students use it? How and why do we as teachers and students use theory? What does all this using tell us about art education and the academy? And, ultimately, what is the role of psychoanalysis within art education?

### A Revealing Experience: Teaching On The Unfinished New Jersey Turnpike

There is a pivotal moment in Michael Fried's June 1967 *Artforum* essay 'Art and Objecthood'. It comes after a lengthy setup of Fried's key argument that '*[t]he crucial distinction that I am proposing is between work that is fundamentally theatrical and work that is not*' (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 157, emphasis in original). In building up to this statement in which Fried clearly asserts the championing of modernist art against the 'theatrical sensibility' of Minimal Art, he spends time

discussing what is at stake in this distinction.<sup>1</sup> Fried explains that Minimal Art's theatrical sensibility is based on its claims that since painting and sculpture have exhausted the possibilities of pictorial illusion and shape, the Minimal artwork must boldly maintain its objecthood, and with it activate the space and position of the beholder. In achieving these goals, Minimal Art declares what Fried considers to be its troubling theatricality. At this crucial point in Fried's argument, he moves from a description of Minimal Art to a critical analysis, followed by his damning judgment of it. In order to pivot his argument at this decisive moment, Fried uses a personal anecdote recounted by the artist Tony Smith, that he had read only a few months earlier in the December 1966 issue of *Artforum*. Smith narrates an experience he had 15 years earlier while he was teaching Masters of Fine Art students at Cooper Union in the early 1950s (Smith and Wagstaff, Jr., 1966). Fried quotes Smith's retelling of his experience in 'Art and Objecthood':

'When I [Smith] was teaching at Cooper Union in the first year or two of the fifties, someone told me how I could get onto the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. I took three students and drove from somewhere in the Meadows to New Brunswick. It was a dark night and there were no lights or shoulder markers, lines, railings, or anything at all except the dark pavement moving through the landscape of the flats, rimmed by hills in the distance, but punctuated by stacks, towers, fumes, and colored lights. This drive was a revealing experience. The road and much of the landscape was artificial, and yet it couldn't be called a work of art. On the other hand, it did something for me that art had never done. At first I didn't know what it was, but its effect was to liberate me from many of the views I had had about art. It seemed that there had been a reality there that had not had any expression in art.

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<sup>1</sup> Fried prefers to call Minimal Art, literalist art throughout the essay, but for the sake of semantic clarity and the fact that this form of art practice has come to be known as Minimal Art or Minimalism, I will use this term throughout my article.

The experience on the road was something mapped out but not socially recognized. I thought to myself, it ought to be clear that's the end of art. Most painting looks pretty pictorial after that. There is no way you can frame it, you just have to experience it' (Smith in Fried, 1967/1998, pp. 157-8).

I am very interested in Smith's experience, and how important it must have been to him and his conception of art and art practice that he made the decision to recount it so many years later in his interview with Samuel Wagstaff, Jr. for *Artforum*. What strikes me as vital to Smith's experience is that it was pedagogical. Smith was in a car with three fine art students whom he was teaching at Cooper Union. The classroom was inside the car, and that day's class was the ride itself. Smith took them out for an unlawful ride on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike (it was illegal to drive on it while it was under construction), presumably in the hope that he would teach his students something (although we are not sure what the pedagogical lesson he planned was meant to have been, if the students learned anything, or if the lesson was what Smith eventually learned himself). What we do know is that it took Smith some time to figure out what the pedagogic lesson was for himself. Smith says that 'at first' he 'didn't know what it was' that he was experiencing, it was only later, and upon reflection, that he came to see it as a 'revealing experience', and he realized that 'its effect was to liberate' him from 'many of the views' and conventions he 'had had about art' and had been working within up to that point (Smith in Fried, 1967/1998, p. 158). The pedagogical experience Smith came to appreciate (for himself and with his students) was that the event on the turnpike was both destructive and transformative. It was 'the end of art'; while at the same time, his conception of art and art practice was transformed by the recognition of 'a reality' 'that had not had any expression in art' (Smith in Fried, 1967/1998, p. 158). It was an experience that although 'mapped out' was 'not socially recognized' (Smith in Fried, 1967/1998, p. 158). In fact, a different form of art emerged, one in which, as Smith explains, 'there is no way you can frame it, you just have to experience it' (Smith in Fried, 1967/1998 p. 158). In considering the different stages within this pedagogical lesson, a set of processes can be outlined: an

experience (taking a car ride on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike); instances of destruction and revelation (the end of art); acts of transformation and liberation (a different understanding of the art object and practice develops); and temporal delay (the process takes time, and includes a lag between the experience and the artist's understanding of it).

I'm also interested in Fried's analysis of Smith's experience and how crucial it is to the critic's argument in 'Art and Objecthood'. Fried begins by reiterating the salient features of Smith's experience. Fried notes that what was 'revealed' to Smith was the moribund 'conventional nature of art', and this resulted in Smith's pronouncement of "'the end of art'" (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 158). Then, he highlights Smith's inability to "'frame" his experience on the road, [Smith had] no way to make sense of it in terms of art, to make art of it'. 'Rather', Fried says quoting Smith, "'you just have to experience it" – as it happens, as it merely is. (The experience alone is what matters)' (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 158). At this point, Fried turns the tables on Smith, and Minimal Art, by marveling at the fact that '[t]here is no suggestion that this [reliance on experience] is problematic in any way' (Fried, p. 158). For Fried, Smith's experience and the resultant Minimal Art practice brought into play a set of considerations about the nature of art that Fried finds wanting and ultimately hopes to invalidate.

Fried clearly recognizes that in destroying the conventions of art, Minimal Art provides an alternative form of art and the conditions in which we view it that promoted what Fried calls the 'objecthood' of the artwork. The modernist artwork championed by Fried is, in that moment, being '*replaced* by something: for example, on the turnpike by the constant onrush of the road, the simultaneous recession of new reaches of dark pavement illuminated by the onrushing headlights, the sense of the turnpike itself as something enormous, abandoned, derelict' (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 159). Fried is concerned that the modernist artwork is being replaced by a theatrical sensibility that views the artwork as an 'experience' and an 'object' (Fried is careful to refer to Minimal Art as an object or having objecthood as opposed to modernist art practices that produce art or an artwork). Moreover, the experience of encountering this Minimal object is deeply problematic because although it is shared by others, 'on the one hand, the turnpike [...] belongs to no one'. Fried is quick to

point out that 'on the other hand, the situation established by Smith's presence is in each case felt by him to be *his*' (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 159). The paradox Fried is highlighting is that the situation Smith experienced is both shared – with his students, for instance – and yet, at the same time, singular, for Smith alone. For Fried, this singularity denies the artwork one of its essential roles: to communicate beyond the individual viewer (whether this be the beholder of the artwork or the artist) to a shared aesthetic experience.

Fried continues his biting critique of Minimal Art by emphasizing that unlike modernist art in which '*at every moment the work itself is wholly manifest*' to the viewer (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 167, emphasis in original), the Minimal object '*persists in time*' during which 'the beholder is made aware of the endlessness and inexhaustibility if not of the object itself at any rate of his experience of it' (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 166, emphasis in original). The consequences of this temporal interminability are also problematic for Fried. He maintains that, like Smith's experience, a Minimal object 'establishes the experience itself as something like that of an object, or rather, of objecthood' that involves a form of 'distancing or isolating the beholder, of making him a subject' that ultimately 'makes him subject' (and subjected) to the object and its objecthood (Fried, 1967/1998, p. 159). This is what Fried calls the Minimal object's theatrical sensibility.

What is striking about Fried's detailed analysis of Smith's experience on the turnpike is how the critic employs it and its consequences pedagogically. Fried wants to teach us something about the value of modernist art. In doing so, as I have shown, he rehearses Smith's experience for us, defines the terms of the debate, and attempts to persuade us of his interpretation and judgment as to why we too should champion modernist art over Minimal Art. What we have then, in both Smith's experience and Fried's interpretation of it, are two different pedagogical moments, two distinct interpretations, and opposing judgments. Yet, these differences are based on a set of shared terms.

What is at stake here is a 'revelation' that challenges and destroys 'artistic conventions' claiming the 'end of art', and then transforming these conventions into something else. The processes of revelation, destruction, and transformation are based on a set of roles played by the 'subject' and 'object' within a 'situation' that is

constituted by a 'persistence in time', an 'endlessness' of the 'experience' of an artwork. Although Smith and Fried have very different understandings of the meaning of these processes, their affect, and the situation in which it leaves artworks and art practices, what I find so remarkable about these terms is that they are embedded in and come out of what I have demarcated as pedagogical moments for both Smith and Fried.

Both the artist and critic use Smith's (pedagogical) experience to teach us (and themselves) something about art. In viewing these moments as pedagogical, in this article, I ask: What can these pedagogical experiences and the terms they set up, as well as the use of experience as a form of pedagogy, teach us about art education? More precisely, what can they teach us about art education and psychoanalysis?

Why psychoanalysis? Although Fried has been interested in psychoanalysis at certain junctures throughout his career, it is not fundamental to his interpretative framework.<sup>2</sup> Having said that, if we go back to Smith's experience and the terms that both Smith and Fried employ to analyze it, we encounter a set of terms that are deeply resonant within psychoanalysis: 'convention', 'revelation', 'destruction'; 'subject', 'object', 'situation' and 'experience'; 'persistence in time' and 'endlessness'. The echoes between these terms and psychoanalysis are worth pursuing. They enable a productive discussion of art education and psychoanalysis, and offer a response to a comment Sigmund Freud made about education and psychoanalysis: 'it is so exceedingly important, so rich in hopes for the future, perhaps the most important of all the activities of analysis. What I am thinking of is

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<sup>2</sup> The most extensive use of psychoanalysis in Michael Fried's work takes place in *Courbet's Realism* (1990), *Menzel's Realism: Art and Embodiment in Nineteenth-Century Berlin* (2002), and *The Moment of Caravaggio* (2010). The latter two books take a very provocative approach to psychoanalysis by employing the work of Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, specifically two of Borch-Jacobsen's publications *The Freudian Subject* (1988), and *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect* (1992). Other works by Fried that employ some psychoanalytic interpretation are *Realism, Writing, Disfiguration: On Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane* (1987); *Four Honest Outlaws: Sala, Ray, Marioni, Gordon* (2011); and *Flaubert's 'Gueloir': On Madam Bovary and Salammbô* (2012). For an analysis of Fried's relationship to psychoanalysis, see Beaulieu, Roberts and Ross, eds. *Refracting Vision: Essays on the Writing of Michael Fried* (2000).

the application of psycho-analysis to education, to the upbringing of the next generation' (Freud (1933 [1932]/2001), p. 146). Let me explain.

I have taught 'Art and Objecthood' for almost 25 years: always in the context of fine art education, within an undergraduate curriculum and an art school setting, and always under the rubric of contextual studies, or historical and theoretical studies, or critical studies – all names for teaching something called 'theory' to fine art students. I have 'used' Fried's text (and this matter of 'use' is central to my argument) in lectures, seminars, and individual student-led dissertation projects. Having persisted in using 'Art and Objecthood' throughout my years of teaching fine art students, I have clearly felt that it has a lot to teach. On the occasion of writing this article, I have had the opportunity to ponder this persistence, the various experiences I have had in using this text, and the larger questions around what teaching theory to art students might mean for my students, for myself, and for my work as a teacher. By considering Smith's experience and Fried's interpretation of it as instances of pedagogy and use, I allow this reading to echo and expand throughout three different pedagogical moments over the last 25 years in which I have put Fried's 'Art and Objecthood' to use, and I ask: How have I used Fried's text? How, in turn, do art students use it? How and why do we as teachers and students use theory more generally? What does all this using tell us about art education and the academy? And, ultimately, what is the role of psychoanalysis within art education?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There is an extensive literature on pedagogy, and art school pedagogy. In addition to the texts I refer to specifically in this article, the most relevant to the ideas I am examining are: ElDahab, Maj, Vidokle and Waldvogel (2006); Allen (2011); Bal (2002); Barthes (1977); Chicago (2014); De Ville and Foster (1994); Diaz (2015); Gallop, ed. (1995); Gallop(2002); hooks (2010); Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003); Madoff, ed. (2009); Mahar and Thompson Tetreault (1994); Nobus and Quinn (2005); Pollock (1985/6); Pollock (2010); Rancière (1991); Rifkin (2003); Singerman (1999); Spivak (1993); Tickner (2008).

## Using Experience I: On Unlearning

In 2008, I taught a 2<sup>nd</sup> year BA Fine Art seminar at Central Saint Martins called 'Spaces of Practice: The Studio, the Study and the Art Gallery'. The seminar was an attempt to investigate the various processes and practices that make up what it is that we do in our studio, our study and in an art gallery. (Although the psychoanalytic consulting room was not one of the main spaces driving the seminar, we did attend to it at various points, and it was always at the back of my mind.) More specifically, the seminar was concerned with how we embody, engage in, activate and constitute the spaces in which we practice; and the extent to which the spaces themselves might contribute to constituting the practices as such.

The overarching questions posed by the seminar included: how do we begin a work of art or piece of writing? How can we articulate the moment in which something takes shape as our labour (our work) is transformed into an artwork or a piece of writing or an exhibition? How do we know (or decide) when something is finished, or when it is a failure? What happens next? And what are our experiential and subjective relationships to these practices and processes as practices and processes? What conscious and unconscious, real or imaginary fears, memories, anxieties, desires and pleasures impact upon what we do, what we hope and day-dream of doing? And what we do *not* do in these spaces of practice?

As a part of this seminar, there were weekly (not assessed) writing experiments: for instance to use exactly 50 words to describe our study or studio; exactly 100 words on what we do in these spaces; 100 words exactly on how productive or unproductive, enjoyable or painful our experience in a space is. We also wrote texts on how we begin a work of art or a piece of writing or a curatorial project, and each of us wrote about a project that failed. These pieces of writing were read out in class and discussed. I often was the first to read mine as a means of breaking the ice.<sup>4</sup> The point of these pieces of writing was twofold. First, to show that language is a tool – a medium, as is paint or film. The idea here was to view language as something pliable, workable, resistant, destructive and yet

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<sup>4</sup> On reading one's 'writing' to students in class see hooks (2010) and Barthes (1977).



transformative; the strict word count made this condition of language's materiality very real. The second point to these writing experiments was to estrange ourselves from the spaces in which we work, and the processes and practices with which we engage in these environments in order to destroy and transform them from being predictable to being strange, from the habitual and routine to something that we no longer recognize, in order to view and experience them differently.

Fried's 'Art and Objecthood' was key to one of the classes. The idea was to use Fried's analysis of art's 'situation' – whether in terms of modernist art or Minimal Art – as a means of understanding the subject positions and practices available to us as makers, viewers, and writers in the studio, gallery or study.<sup>5</sup> As a part of the class we talked about Smith's experience on the New Jersey Turnpike and Fried's interpretation of it. The anecdote formed a very visceral instance of estrangement. As a personal anecdote it was exemplary of the type of writing we were doing in the class. It also put into play the fact that a studio (or classroom, or study, or gallery, in this case in the car) is not necessarily where we expect it to be, and that an experience within this space, can destroy and transform our understanding of what we do and how others encounter it (as it did for Smith).

On the supplementary reading list to the class on Fried's 'Art and Objecthood' was an essay by psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott entitled 'The Use of An Object and Relating Through Identification' (Winnicott, 1969/2002).<sup>6</sup> In this text, Winnicott outlines his ideas regarding the 'use' of objects within the development of the human subject; the role of use within clinical analysis; and the ongoing importance of making use of objects throughout one's life. For Winnicott, the infant/analysand/adult engages in a necessary and ongoing process of using objects in order to establish relations with external reality. First the subject recognizes and relates to an object outside of him or herself. Next, the subject 'destroys' it in '(unconscious) fantasy' (p. 121). If the object '*survives*', the subject can use it, thereby creating and constituting relationships with the world (p. 120, emphasis in original).

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<sup>5</sup> An important analysis of Minimal Art, psychoanalysis (specifically transference), culture and the work of Eva Hesse is in Nixon (2006). On transference and pedagogy see, Frank (1995), and also Phillips (1993/1994).

<sup>6</sup> The companion piece to this text is Winnicott's 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' (1953/2002).

Without wanting to make a determinate analogy between Smith's experience, Fried's interpretation of it, and Winnicott's understanding of use, I did bring these two texts together as a means of evoking the way in which the terms of these experiences and processes echo one another: destruction, transformation, subjects, objects, and experience are aspects of each of these situations. These processes were also hovering around the questions that we were interrogating in the seminar and with the writing experiments. The idea was to 'use' language, space and theory: to destroy and transform it – to use it – for our work as artists, writers, and curators.

This resonates well with an idea that psychoanalyst Adam Phillips puts forward in relation to the educative aspects of psychoanalysis. For Phillips, 'psychoanalysis is an education in the art of unlearning' (Phillips, 2006, p. 155). As a form of unlearning, psychoanalysis offers education a means of understanding the process by which what we thought we knew is unraveled and transformed. This then teaches us something about ourselves that we did not realize we knew. We achieve this through language – through speaking, and importantly through listening. In effect, unlearning is a destruction and reorientation of ourselves through language.

In a practical way, the general questions raised in the seminar and the more specific ones highlighted through an analysis of Smith's experience and Fried's interpretation of it (as well as the writing experiments we wrote and presented to one another) were all attempts at unlearning what we had been taught as artists, writers, and curators.

Having worked in an art school environment for many years, I have become more and more attuned to the importance of practice – whether art making, writing, or curating. This has meant that my attitude towards teaching theory has been impacted upon by the way in which art students take risks with theory. They destroy and transform it, they take what I (think I) teach and make it unfamiliar to itself, they unlearn it. In this seminar I was attempting to put this knowledge to use by using various spaces of practice (studio, study, gallery), language (writing, speaking, and

listening), and diverse theories pertaining to them as objects (e.g. 'Art and Objecthood'). The experiment we were all participating in was to destroy and transform these spaces, processes and materials in order to unlearn them: for all of us to use and be used by theory.<sup>7</sup>

### Using Experience II: On Allegory and 'After-Education'

In the early 1990s there was a resurgence of interest in allegory and contemporary art practice, particularly postmodern art and its alliance with post-structuralist theory. The political impetus of allegory, with its reliance on the polyvalent nature of language and speaking otherwise (wherein one thing is said and another is meant) became a useful tool of resistance for artists and theorists with which to counteract reactionary tendencies in the conservative climate of the time. As a part of this interest in allegory, I taught an undergraduate seminar at the University of Leeds for both fine art and art history students. My motivation was twofold: I was working on the topic for my PhD; and I was interested in thinking about and discussing the ways in which allegory could be useful to many politically-motivated students who were fully ensconced in the theories and art practices of the time.

Although 'Art and Objecthood' was not on my primary reading list, it was a supplementary text to the class on Stephen Melville's 'Notes on the Reemergence of Allegory, the Forgetting of Modernism, the Necessity of Rhetoric, and the Conditions of Publicity in Art and Criticism' (Melville, 1981). Melville's article is a complex analysis of allegory, art criticism and rhetoric by means of, as Melville says, 'the terms and the limits of the formalist program of the middle and late sixties (the terms and limits of "Art and Objecthood" above all) – and the historical elaboration that program has received in Michael Fried's subsequent writings' (p. 148). In this way, Fried's 'Art and Objecthood' became significant for my seminar on allegory.

During this seminar one of the students was deeply resistant to the topic under investigation and the texts we were discussing. He displayed visible signs of

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<sup>7</sup> A related instance of using theory is taken up in Juliet Mitchell's article 'Theory as an Object' (2005).

frustration that were either verbally articulated or made manifest through gesture and disposition. He regularly told me that the seminar did nothing for him, and was not at all worthwhile. He was clearly not pleased with it. Many months after the seminar had ended, I ran into this student in Leeds city center. He said that he was so pleased to see me; that finally the ideas we had been considering in the class made sense to him and had become useful. It wasn't that allegory was in any way meaningful to him because of its relationship to the critical theory or contemporary art context in which I had taught it: rather, it was because of his own interest outside of the classroom and his undergraduate degree. He went on to explain how the ideas on allegory resonated for him, and were useful for him, as a musician – he was a guitarist in an indie band and that's where his aspirations lay – because they enabled him to understand the way in which music was an allegorical form of creative practice.

This pedagogical experience has always remained with me. It speaks to me about many ideas related to teaching and learning: the importance of time (and belatedness); the non-linearity of thinking and the leaps that take place across disciplines; the breakthroughs in experience which are unknown and unexpected; that like allegory, we teach one thing and it ends up meaning something altogether different to our students (and ourselves). Ultimately, in coming to understand these things, I learnt that I too am a student in the classroom. Like Tony Smith who took his students out for a ride on the turnpike, and who did not know what it was that he had experienced that evening, only to understand its revelatory effects belatedly and then putting them to use in his art practice, so, too, this experience and this student taught me something important about pedagogy. It opened up my thinking about the temporality of learning and teaching – about resistance, about the non-linearity of knowledge, its digressions and detours, about delay. In retrospect, I see now that it introduced me, before the fact, to Freud's idea of psychoanalysis as a form of 'after-education' (*Nacherziehung*), an idea with which I have only recently engaged, and one that has enabled me to develop in important respects my understanding of art education.

Freud employed the idea of 'after-education' several times in his writing.<sup>8</sup> The most extensive examination of it takes place in the 'Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis' from 1916-17 where he considers psychoanalysis in 'an educative sense'. In relation to this, Freud notes how

[t]his work of overcoming resistances is the essential function of analytic treatment; the patient has to accomplish it and the doctor makes this possible for him with the help of suggestion operating in an *educative* sense. For that reason psycho-analytic treatment has justly been described as a kind of *after-education*. (Freud, 1916-17/2001, p. 451)

Each time Freud employs the term 'after-education' in relation to psychoanalysis, he is claiming that as a therapeutic, it is a form of education. This education takes place 'after' we have already been constituted (or educated) as the subjects we have become. In analysis, our personal neuroses, symptoms and resistances are spoken, interpreted and worked-through. This process of working-through is a form of education. More precisely, it is a form of 'after-education' because it teaches us after the fact, who we are, and how we have come to be, in order for us to overcome that which brought us to analysis in the first place. This means that the time of psychoanalysis as an 'after-education' is the time of belatedness: it always comes later, after the experience has taken place.

In his essay 'Literature, Teaching, Psychoanalysis', literary theorist Nicholas Royle, following Freud, expands on the temporality of psychoanalysis as an 'after-education' when he notes that 'it entails an experience of the *after* that belongs to no present' (Royle, 2003, p. 60, emphasis in original). For Royle, and I agree with him, this 'after' is also the time of education: belatedness is key to education, pedagogy and learning. The student in my allegory seminar coming to use the ideas well after the class had ended is an instance of this, as is my belated understanding

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<sup>8</sup> Freud employs the idea of after-education on three separate occasions in his work: Freud, (1905 [1904]/2001); Freud (1916-17/2001); and Freud (1925/2001).

of that experience as an example of what pedagogy entails in terms of afterwardsness.

This process of 'after-education' does not only take place for our students: it is also integral to our activities and subjectivities as teachers. How often have we experienced as teachers a moment, or several different ones, in the classroom that haunt us afterwards for weeks, months, even years. It might be a remark to a student, or something they have said, or something heard, or an unresolved understanding of something taught, or a disclosure of not-knowing that remains until it has been worked through together or not at all. Such instances of after-education, of unresolved educative moments, are integral to our teaching practices, to the formation and production of knowledge, and to pedagogical experience.

Literary and psychoanalytic scholar Shoshana Felman also takes up Freud's idea of 'after-education' in her essay 'Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable' (Felman, 1982). Felman begins by pondering the ways in which psychoanalysis is a pedagogical experience which 'gives new knowledge hitherto denied to consciousness, it affords what might be called a lesson in cognition (and in miscognition), an epistemological instruction' (p. 27). Because of its ability to do so, psychoanalysis has instituted a 'unique and radically original mode of learning' in both its procedures and the way in which 'it gives access to information unavailable through any other mode of learning – unprecedented information, hitherto *unlearnable*' (p. 27, emphasis in original). The production of this form of new knowledge takes place through a

different temporality than the conventional linear – cumulative and progressive – temporality of learning, as it has traditionally been conceived by pedagogical theory and practice. Proceeding not through linear progression, but through breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action, the analytic learning-process puts indeed in question the traditional pedagogical belief in intellectual perfectability, the progressivistic view of learning as a simple one-way road from ignorance to knowledge. (p. 27)

We know as teachers, and students, that the processes and practices of teaching and learning are anything but linear, cumulative and progressive. As we teach, as we write, as we make artwork or curate exhibitions, we are aware of the fact that the process is constituted by, as Felman says, 'breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action'. Perhaps we should also include resistances, remembering and forgetting, repetition and working-through as well as transference, and the earlier processes raised by Smith and Fried, such as, convention, revelation, destruction, subject-object experience, persistence in time and endlessness. In effect then, with the unconscious at work at all times, there is always something unknown as well as known at play in education: a form of after-education that takes place through unlearning as a form of knowledge. As Felman puts it,

Knowledge, in other words, is not a *substance* but a structural dynamic: it is not *contained* by any individual but comes about out of mutual apprenticeship between two partially unconscious speeches which both say more than they know. Dialogue is thus the radical condition of learning and of knowledge, the analytically constitutive condition through which ignorance becomes structurally informative; knowledge is essentially irreducibly dialogic. (p. 33, emphasis in original)

Because knowledge is irreducibly dialogic, the student and teacher learn from one another. But, there are always more than teachers and students in the classroom. The dialogue is always extended. As educators we need to be attuned to what Royle calls 'the logic of haunting and ghosts':

To be haunted, to be in the company of ghosts is not necessarily a cause for fear or panic. It is something to affirm: it is the very condition of thinking and feeling. There is no teaching without memory (however unconscious or cryptic) of the dead, without a logic of mourning that haunts or can always come back to haunt, without an encounter with

the questions of inheritance (Who or what is a teacher? Who or what has taught the teacher? How did this scene of teaching come about? Am I thinking my own thoughts? Where does a thought, an idea, a teaching begin? (Royle, 2003, p. 53)<sup>9</sup>

This haunting is by the ghosts of our past, by our memories, by our subjectivity, by the situation in which we have found and find ourselves as teachers, by the ideas we have imbibed, destroyed, transformed, by our thoughts and those of someone else.

As we work and learn in the classroom we engage in a form of speaking and listening to oneself and numerous others who haunt us. We also recognize that what 'obstructs speaking and listening' is also entirely at work within education, as it is in psychoanalysis. This means that, as Phillips puts it, '[l]earning to speak and listen [...] has no pre-formed content. It has no predictable outcome' (Phillips, 2006, p. 150).

Learning from one's students and those that haunt us is also a form of after-education: a form of unlearning what we thought we knew. In order for us to be open to this dialogic form of learning and unlearning we must 'ignore' what we know and accept that each time we enter the classroom we are entering into the 'as yet unknown' (Felman, 1982, p. 29). Precarious as this may seem, and is, we know from reflecting back on our educative experiences that this unknown is what prompts us to acknowledge the time of learning as a time of unlearning: our students, ourselves, our ghosts are speaking and listening in a dialogic process of reckoning with the as yet unknown, this disrupts what we think we know, and opens us up to what Rogoff has called the 'potentiality' of the academy (2007). Arriving belatedly, this process takes time, and is a form of after-education for both the student and the teacher.

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<sup>9</sup> Royle extends this comment by writing:

Who is speaking and to whom is one speaking when one teaches? One of the most 'obvious' yet still perhaps incomprehensible truths of psychoanalysis becomes evident as soon as one questions, in the classroom, who is present and who is not: am I not, as a teacher, inseparable from those who have taught me? And does the classroom only contain those who are 'literally' present? Are there not mothers and fathers, friends and others, alive and dead, and even not yet born, known and unknown, also in the classroom? (Royle, 2003, p.56).



Filled with unknowns and yet-to-be known, the classroom is as Royle notes, a space of 'radical uncertainty':

There is no teaching, it may be said, without this experience of radical uncertainty about whom one is addressing and, by extension, who is teaching whom. The experience of such uncertainty is not a negative thing: it is rather the condition of teaching and learning. (Royle, 2003, p. 56)

### Using Experience III: On the Impossible Profession of Education

One of my most recent pedagogical encounters with 'Art and Objecthood' has been as a student, rather than a teacher. Stephen Melville, Visiting Professor at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, led a seminar in Autumn 2015 called 'Art's Institutions – The Art School'. Open to all staff and students across the University, the premise of the seminar was to consider the art school, the university, and education more generally. In the first class, Melville presented a substantial and wide-ranging assessment of the state of art education, the art school and the academy that prompted an intense discussion about higher education in England and the United States. For the next class, student interests led Melville to suggest we read 'Art and Objecthood', and another lively debate ensued during this session. Key to both these classes, and the entire seminar, was the troubling matters of the increasing bureaucratization and managerialisation of the academy as well as the infiltration of neo-liberal values that manifest themselves in various ways, from learning criteria and quantifiable outcomes, to the funding crisis in higher education, to various government initiatives invested in measuring 'excellence' – in research and teaching, for instance. At the heart of this ideological assault on higher education today, is an interrogation of the 'usefulness' of what we do in the academy: if something cannot be adequately quantified in terms of its use value, it is

deemed to be of no use, and is thus, unjustifiable and therefore expendable.<sup>10</sup> (This form of use is diametrically opposed to the version of it that Winnicott proposes, and the ways in which I am positing use within this article.) Royle remarks on this problematic state of affairs within higher education and the usefulness of psychoanalysis in resisting it in 'Literature, Teaching, Psychoanalysis' when in reference to learning outcomes he writes,

Psychoanalysis teaches, then, that the time of teaching is irreducibly strange: what passes does not pass when it passes. The meaning of an experience, the experience of a teaching, does not belong to the present. Nor does it belong to any other time. It is never at home in time. Perhaps this will have been one of the most uncanny lessons of psychoanalysis. The time of the classroom is beside itself, haunted, in deferral. Nothing of this is available for translation into the demented language of 'learning outcomes'. (Royle, 2003, p. 60)

If we return to Winnicott and his idea of time in relation to psychoanalysis, we are reminded that use does not need to be quantifiable. For Winnicott, psychoanalytic time is the time of belatedness, and he stresses the temporal delay between when things occur and are they understood by the patient, and the analyst (Winnicott acknowledges that it took him some time to learn that waiting before making an interpretation is extremely useful for the patient, as it enabled them to come to their own understanding). Learning outcomes rely on an expedient form of knowledge formation and production based on the limited time-frame of modules: these are institutional and ideological criteria that limit education, not encourage it. If we understand education as a form of after-education and a process of unlearning, an experience of radical uncertainty through its irreducibly dialogic process, then psychoanalysis offers us an antidote to this state of education.

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<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, Readings (1996); McGettigan (2013), and Bowman (2015).

## Using Use: On the Pleasures of Art Education's Interminability

In 1937, two years before Freud died, in a reflective mood he wrote 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable'. In this text, Freud considers what psychoanalysis has taught us, and refers to it and education as 'impossible professions'. He laments the fact, that in both analyzing patients and teaching 'one can be sure beforehand of achieving unsatisfying results' (Freud, 1937/2001, p. 248).<sup>11</sup> Freud explains the reasons for these unsatisfying results. Psychoanalysis is a 'time-consuming business' (p. 217): it proceeds by way of 'slow progress' and thus requires a great deal of time (p. 219). The best that can be hoped for is that the analysis can 'secure the best possible psychological conditions for the function of the ego; with that it has discharged its task' (p. 219). And even then, once the psychoanalysis has ended and the patient no longer sees their analyst, the work of psychoanalysis remains unfinished: the patient continues to use the tools learned within analysis throughout their life.

Freud was already thinking about the interminability of psychoanalysis in 1918, and its relationship to education in his essay 'On the Teaching of Psychoanalysis in Universities'. In this text he considers what psychoanalysis has to offer higher education, and what psychoanalysis can learn from it in return. At a critical point in his argument, he makes a distinction that is well-worth noting. Freud writes that although a University (medical) student will not train to be analyst, psychoanalysis can offer that student something valuable: the student 'learns something *about* psychoanalysis and something *from* it' (Freud, 1919 [1918]/2001, p. 173, emphasis in original). Freud is proposing a crucial way of thinking about the importance of psychoanalysis within education. We can learn something '*about*' psychoanalysis: we can learn it as a subject – i.e., learn what the writings of psychoanalysis say. In addition, psychoanalysis offers us the opportunity to learn something '*from*' it: we can learn something that has an affect on who we are and how we live. It's rather like saying that in considering psychoanalysis and education, we can be interested in psychoanalysis as a subject to be studied and learned, *and*,

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<sup>11</sup> On psychoanalysis and education as impossible professions, see also Freud (1933 [1932]/2001).

we can consider the implications of psychoanalysis for education, and what it can offer our understanding and practice of pedagogy and education.

During the past autumn, I asked a group of my students why they were taking an undergraduate degree in Fine Art. The answer for the vast majority of them was not to become an artist. One wanted to curate exhibitions, another to train as an art therapist, but most of them did not have a 'career goal'; most of them wanted to learn something about what they called 'living creatively'. They wanted to learn how to bring creativity into their lives after graduation in whatever profession they ended up choosing. These students were saying something about education as a form of after-education. They wished to unlearn what they had learned and take that experience with them when they left art school. They were living in a form of radical uncertainty with regards to careers, and yet were certain that their careers would involve a pleasure in living. As Phillips points out about psychoanalysis: '[t]he extraordinary thing that Freud has to tell us is that our pleasure is something that we have to relearn. And that we need someone to teach us.' (Phillips (2006), p. 160) Perhaps these students understood this already, that the education they desired was to relearn what it means to live creatively, pleasurably, and that the rest would follow. It was as if without teaching them this psychoanalytic lesson about radical uncertainty, unlearning and living with pleasure, they had learned something *about* psychoanalysis and something *from* it.

In many ways, what these students are working towards and hoping for through their education brings us back to Smith's experience on the turnpike with his students, and Fried's interpretation of it. If we listen, we can hear echoes between them. From the radical uncertainty (of taking the car ride itself as a pedagogical exercise) of learning, to the experience of it as a form of unlearning (challenging and destroying the conventions of art), to find oneself in a 'situation' that is constituted by a 'persistence in time', an 'endlessness' of unlearning as a generative, educative experience. Smith would be pleased with the way in which these students' are constantly searching for ideas, desires and pleasure in this way: Fried less so. What the students hope for is an interminable experience (of unlearning): that brings to mind what Fried cannot abide by in Minimal Art, the endlessness of experiencing it. Fried's concern with this form of experience, and how

it is arrived at from the limit-factors that he places on art. These limits are what art education as a form of after-education is constantly interrogating and shifting.

As an after-education, we have and are continuing to learn '*about*' psychoanalysis *and* learn '*from*' it. Freud's proposal is asking us to put psychoanalysis to use. The long duration of psychoanalysis that Freud laments, but knows is necessary, reminds us that Winnicott considered use a life-long process as well. What we teach our students, when we are at our best, is how to use the objects and experiences we encounter with them in the classroom throughout their lives. And they teach us this as well. In teaching theory to fine art students, I have learned how they take risks with it, deform it, extend and contract it, metaphorize and literalize it out of shape and recognition, they personalize it and make it affective in ways that are their own. In effect they use it. I have learned that at our best in the classroom, we are able to teach each other theory as a form of unlearning, as an after-education. This dialogue and process is not one of mirroring: I do not expect them to return to me what I have given them.<sup>12</sup> Quite the opposite, I hope that when something returns, it is unrecognizable. Like the moments of use that continue throughout our life, so too learning, and teaching, is interminable. As students, and as teachers, the use of objects in the transformation of our subjectivities is interminable. This is the promise of what we as educators can learn *about* and *from* psychoanalysis. This is the great pleasure of pedagogy: both teaching and learning.

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<sup>12</sup> On the fear of mirroring within pedagogy, see, Barthes (1977).

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