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Rethinking the "We": Tomasello and Winnicott

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Abstract

Since the late 19th century, evolutionary theory has transformed our approach to the questions about human origins by providing a scientific basis for understanding the relationship between animals and humans. Pedagogy has also been influenced by evolutionary theory through concepts such as "natural" development and "heredity and environment." As a result, pedagogy has shaped its own role in promoting "humanization" while assuming the undecidability of human nature. Nevertheless, it is important to examine human diversity and explore intermediate areas in which human diversity is intertwined. To this end, this report examines Michael Tomasello's and Donald W. Winnicott's arguments and rethinks the nature of relationality and community in humans.

Examining the differences between humans and other great apes, Tomasello argues that a collective identity of "we" is formed in collaborative activities involving joint intentionality. He situates human thinking and education in the context of this unique relationship. Winnicott, however, finds an intermediate area by focusing on the infant's illusion and playing prior to joint intentionality. Winnicott's argument will offer a new "we" that complements Tomasello's "we" with slight relationships.

Key words: Evolutionary Theory, Anthropological Machine, Tomasello, Joint Intentionality, Winnicott, Illusion and Playing

Introduction

What is human nature? What were primordial humans and society like? Questions about human origins have been asked repeatedly. Whether one views the primordial man as a struggling being, as Thomas Hobbes did, or as an exchanging being, as Adam Smith did, is not merely a theoretical problem but a practical one that enables the formation of

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new images of humans and society. In the second half of the 19th century, the theory of evolution provided a basis for scientific thinking about the relationship between humans and animals, transforming our approach to the questions about origins. Even in recent years, new knowledge about humans informed by evolutionary theory has continued to accumulate.

The purpose of this report is to rethink the nature of relationality and community in human beings by focusing on Michael Tomasello's attempt. He relates evolution and child development and explores primordial human society. His discussion provides a starting point for considering the meaning of education for human beings. I will first outline the purpose of this report by examining Giorgio Agamben's argument about the "anthropological machine." Next, I will delve into Tomasello's discussion of primordial human society, with a focus on joint intentionality and the form of cooperation unique to humans, namely "we." Finally, I explore the relationality preceding joint intentionality and complement Tomasello's discussion of "we" by examining psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott's theory of child development.

1. Evolutionary Theory, Anthropological Machine, and Pedagogy

As is well known, Sigmund Freud (1986 [1917]) argued that his own psychoanalysis, along with Copernicus' heliocentrism and Darwin's theory of evolution, did damage to human narcissism. According to him, heliocentrism broke the illusion that man was the center of the universe, evolutionary theory challenged the hubris that man differed from animals and was superior, and psychoanalysis sought to dismantle the authority of the ego (SS. 7–12). However, heliocentrism demonstrated divine providence without denying the existence of God (Canguilhem 1988, pp. 103–105), and Freud's psychoanalysis preserved the human authority to use language. Considering this, it can be said that Darwin's theory dealt the most profound blow.

Takashi Sakagami (2003) summarizes Darwin's innovations in three ways: first, placing the notion of transformation at the foundation of his theory and rejecting "species essentialism;" second, eliminating teleology by introducing the ideas of environment-dependent natural selection and the aimlessness of individual variation; and third, considering "the statistical and probabilistic law" (pp. 15–17). In other words, Darwin placed animals and humans in a process of randomness and diversity, revealing the undecidability of human nature. As Georges Canguilhem (1991) noted, this enabled a new understanding that humans and animals were mutually independent and

transforming without a hierarchy (pp. 126–144). However, Darwin’s theory activated non-Darwinian concepts of progressive evolution in the second half of the 19th century. Herbert Spencer, Ernst Haeckel, and others developed teleological theories of evolution based on ideas such as the inheritance of acquired characteristics or the theory of recapitulation. The concept of evolution, lacking purpose and direction, was replaced by the concept of linear progress, implying human superiority (Bowler 1992). Sakagami interprets these trends as alleviating the blow to human narcissism (Sakagami 2003, p. 16).

Given the circumstances of the time, it seems inevitable that Darwin’s theory of evolution, while highlighting the undecidability of human nature, also spurred a movement to obscure this complexity. If Darwin’s theory and progressive evolutionary theories are understood as discursive devices that form a single unity, they can be considered to have played a central role in what Agamben calls the “anthropological machine.” The “anthropological machine” is an accumulation of knowledge and techniques that define human beings through complex operations of exclusion and inclusion. According to Agamben, in antiquity, modes of thought that defined humanity in relation to animals attempted to humanize animals, resulting in the creation of hybrid entities such as *Homo ferus*. Contrastingly, the modern “anthropological machine,” while attempting to demarcate humans and animals, is confronted with a lack of human specificity and attempts to draw a line of demarcation within human beings. Consequently, the nonhuman (e.g., animal life or organic life) is found inside human beings and is excluded. A residue that is neither man nor animal, or a “bare life” stripped of all humanity, is thus produced (Agamben 2004, pp. 29–38). From this perspective, the evolutionary discourse of the late 19th century has drawn a dividing line within humanity and created exceptional beings. The evolutionary discourse not only revealed the lack of human specificity, as demonstrated by Darwin, but also prompted psychiatry’s theory of degeneration as well as anthropological investigations of “savagery” and “uncivilization” as early stages of humanity.

Pedagogy is also not unrelated to the “anthropological machine” associated with evolutionary theory. According to Hisato Morita, Darwin’s theory of evolution framed developmental psychology by introducing the concept of adaptation and providing a binary scheme of “heredity and environment.” There, on the one hand, scholars such as Stanley Hall explored “natural” development on the basis of teleological evolutionary theories, and on the other hand, William James and others emphasized “random selection” without direction and focused on the interaction between organism and environment (Morita 1992, 1994, 2000). Here we find an attempt to explore human nature and

establish education in the face of the lack of human specificity. In this context, pedagogy has focused on "natural" development and defined unruly children as exceptional beings, while concurrently being aware of the lack of human specificity and boldly tackling the difficult task of "humanization." In this sense, it can be said that since the end of the 19th century, pedagogy has established its own foundations by promoting "humanization" within the framework of developmental theory, while acknowledging the undecidability of human nature[1].

Of course, pedagogy has not simply involved setting up an "anthropological machine" in motion. Recent themes in the philosophy of education such as the *Infans*, the Other, and the Becoming are attempts to redefine the residue produced by the "anthropological machine." Specifically, Satoji Yano (2019) proposed a different approach to education than "humanization," by examining the origins of education in relation to external factors beyond the community and emphasizing the continuity between animals and humans[2]. This would be one way of suspending the "anthropological machine" that operates within pedagogy. What is emphasized here is that there is no simple escape from the "anthropological machine." As Yano states, the abandonment of demarcation can lead to the spread of disorder and violence. Therefore, it is inevitable to establish the boundary between human and nonhuman in a more appropriate way and to promote "humanization" in each situation (p. 138)[3]. Nevertheless,

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[1] See also Yasuo Imai's (2022) discussion on the relationship between evolutionary theory and education. Imai analyzes the controversy in the German-speaking world at the end of the 19th century. The issue there was whether the theory of evolution, considered as a "hypothesis," should be taught in schools. According to Imai, this controversy shows that with the development of natural science, absolute knowledge was shaken, and difficulties arose in teaching correct knowledge about the "world." Imai's assumption is that the concepts of "nature" and "development" of children were needed to overcome these difficulties, and that thus the evolutionary theories of Spencer, Haeckel, and others were drawn upon. Such a teleological theory of evolution reinforced the notion of progressive development and facilitated the naturalistic reduction of education. Imai further discusses that Friedrich Nietzsche and John Dewey attempted to open up a realm of education distinct from the realm of nature, through a non-teleological understanding of evolutionary theory (pp. 55–113). Imai's discussion is an attempt to delineate the appropriate boundaries between culture and nature, human and nonhuman. Contrastingly, the purpose of this report is to identify the area of intertwining between the two, before delineating the boundary between them.

[2] Yano (2019) examines how the boundary between humans and animals has been questioned in pedagogy. Considering Agamben's argument, he notes that an important task of education is not only to establish the boundary between human and nonhuman but also to understand how to cross this boundary (pp. 101–106, pp. 119–141).

[3] In recent anthropology, as seen in Bruno Latour, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Tim Ingold and others, attempts have been made to break down the dichotomy between culture and nature, human and nonhuman, and to describe the two in terms of symmetry (Kasuga 2011). However, even in such attempts, the boundary between human and nonhuman is not unconditionally discarded. For example, Latour

even in such cases, it is necessary to change the mechanisms of anthropological machines. One approach is to examine human diversity and identify an *intermediate space* between humans and nonhumans, where diversity is intertwined and residue is rested.

Since the emergence of sociobiology in the 1970s, attempts have been made to explain altruism and sociality in terms of genes and natural selection. In this context, the conventional views of human nature and society have been challenged. These studies provide an essential basis for delineating certain boundaries. Tomasello's work is one such case study. He explores the fundamental nature of human society through comparative experiments with infants and chimpanzees. The primordial humans described by Tomasello are not in conflict with each other. Rather, they came together to share intentions and goals, forming a collective identity, namely "we." Thus, Tomasello places human thought, morality, and education in the context of relationality and community unique to humans. However, he does not pay much attention to intermediate areas. In the following discussion, I examine his argument, focusing on the concept of "we." I then raise some questions and clarify the direction in which "we" should be reconsidered.

2. Joint Intentionality and "We": Tomasello's Theory of Evolution and Development

Tomasello describes the remarkable behaviors of nonhuman apes. They reason, judge, group, and help each other. The differences between humans and other great apes are not always clear. Beginning with a discussion on joint attention, Tomasello regards the collaborative nature of humans as distinguishing between the two. In *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (1999), human cultural evolution and language acquisition are explained in terms of a nine-month revolution and joint attention.

According to Tomasello (2000 [1999]), the infant engages early in emotionally charged interactions with others ("proto-conversations") through touching and vocalizing. At around nine months of age, the infant's world is reorganized, and the infant begins to understand that others are also agents with intentions. During this stage, the binary

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(1993) criticizes that modern society is creating the appearance of a boundary between human and nonhuman on the one hand, while producing a hybrid of the two on the other. His aim would not be so much to abolish the demarcation of human and nonhuman, but to seek a new "humanization" by examining how the two are mixed together. This report also examines the "in-between" of human and nonhuman in a different way than Latour and explores new humanization.

relationship between the self and others evolves into the ternary relationship involving the self, objects, and others. The infant becomes aware of others' reactions and shares attention with them (pp. 58–65).

Since the work of Jerome Bruner and others, joint attention has been argued as the basis for sharing semantic worlds with others and acquiring language (see Bruner 1995). For example, Sumio Hamada (1992) suggested that through joint attention, infants exchange viewpoints with others and learn how familiar people see and behave toward the third term (pp. 79–85). Tomasello (2000) also examined the function of joint attention and viewed it as an essential scene in developmental process. According to him, first, joint attentional scenes provide opportunities to share intentions and contexts. This prepares infants to read others' intentions and develop imitative learning through an understanding of intentions. Second, joint attentional scenes allow infants to distance themselves from their own perspectives. There, infants become aware that others are paying attention to them, and they begin to see themselves from the perspective of others (pp. 96–100). These processes of sharing intentions and pluralizing one's own perspectives form the basis for symbol formation and language acquisition.

Further, Tomasello focuses on collaborative activities, which entail joint attention and understanding of others' intentions. He situates them within an evolutionary scenario as what constituted the primordial human community. In *The Natural History of Human Thinking* (2014), he discusses how collaborative activities involving joint intentionality and shared goals form a "we" relationship and constitutes a feature of human thinking. Tomasello suggests that hundreds of thousands of years ago, early humans became more inclined toward collaborative foraging. This led to the formation of a "we" that shared a "common-ground" for communication and engaged in self-monitoring from the perspective of others (Tomasello 2014). *The Natural History of Human Morality* (2016) also traces a similar scenario regarding the emergence of moral values such as fairness and equality. Let us now turn to this book, which elaborates on the normative nature of "we."

According to Tomasello (2016), most primates care for kin and "friends" and live interdependently, on the basis of "sympathetic concern." They "form emotional bonds with those who help them (…), and then they naturally help those with whom they are socially bonded — kin and 'friends' as it were" (p. 14). But such "emotional reciprocity" is often embedded in competition and dominance. Cooperation in nonhuman apes therefore occurs only in the context of conflicts with neighboring groups and competition within a group. Tomasello's question concerns the transformation of this situation. In his view, the forced collaboration and interdependence in the hunting of large prey led to the

expansion and transformation of "sympathetic concern," which established the "we" involving the emergence of social norms (ibid., pp. 43–50).

What, then, is the "we" that Tomasello refers to? It is a "joint agent" formed through collaborative activities in which participants share intentionality and goals—a "second-personal agency" that encompasses "I" and "you" but does not belong to either. Tomasello explains this concept from the following perspectives. First, a "common-ground" is formed, comprising shared knowledge and understanding. This provokes a sense of "openness" and a feeling of "ought" (normative trust and responsibility). Second, when participants in a collaborative activity adopt each other's point of view, an exchange of roles becomes possible. Thus, a "bird's-eye view" is generated, which enables participants to conceptualize their cooperative efforts as a whole (ibid., pp. 51–53). Third, with role exchange comes "self-other equivalence," which leads individuals to regard themselves and others as equals (ibid., pp. 55–56). In this way, interaction within a collaborative activity produces mechanisms such as a common-ground, bird's-eye view, and self-other equivalence. These mechanisms represent the ideal form of collaborative activity and govern the relationship between "I" and "you."

Tomasello suggests that partner choice plays a crucial role in the broader functioning of such mechanisms. According to him, obligate collaborative foraging requires individuals to choose good partners. In such situations, early humans recognized that others were evaluating themselves, and they attempted to manipulate others' impressions based on the ideals of cooperative activities[4]. Further, those who acted as free riders or could not participate were excluded. As a result, distribution became a reward for active participation (ibid., pp. 57–62). As the "partner choice market" was established, the second-personal "we" as a "supraindividual entity" began to wield normative power[5]. When partners failed to fulfill their role, they were sanctioned on the basis of "we."

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[4] However, Tomasello notes that these markets were only partial at first, as early humans did not accumulate enough information and included free riders.

[5] Here, we can assume that economic calculations entered into human relationships and community, leading to the principle of efficiency. Tomasello, however, seems to understand the process from collaborative activity to the principle of efficiency in an overly linear manner. Contrastingly, David Graeber (2014) criticizes discussions that understand social relations only in terms of the exchange principle; that is, in terms of accounts and calculations. He notes that there are moral principles not based on these calculations: hierarchy and communism. He further identifies communism as a "baseline communism," which is not a social system but operates in everyday relationships. It is "any human relationship that operates on the principle of 'from each according to their ability, to each according to his needs'" (p. 131). Such baseline communism is at work even in situations in which the principle of exchange dominates. Graeber's argument seems to indicate a different type of relationship and community than the "we" described by Tomasello.

Concurrently, protests against unfair treatment, termed "second-personal protest," became possible. Rather than merely demanding food, protests began to arise from feelings of "resentment against disrespect, resentment against being treated as something less than equal" (ibid., p. 70).

Thus, a new set of social principles emerged, distinct from the sympathetic concerns and great apes' ranking system. Within this framework, each person's behavior is regulated by a collective identity of "we." For a long time, however, this "we" had remained temporary. Tomasello explains that it achieved stability only in the era of modern humans. As modern humans formed cultural groups, a temporary "we" was extended into a customary "we," and an unstable "common-ground" became a "cultural common ground" that was assumed to be known by all members of the group. Consequently, the authority and "objective" perspective of "we," independent of individuals, was established, and social norms related to fairness and equality were formed. However, "we" do not only establish a basis for fairness and equality. When certain individuals gain the power to represent the authority of "we," it could also mean the emergence of a hierarchy based on authority, which is different from the ranking system of animal society (ibid., pp. 67–68). Therein lies the ambivalence between equality and hierarchy.

Here, we can consider the nature of human education. For Tomasello, primordial education is that which is based on the authority of "we" and creates an equilibrium of knowledge, forming a "common-ground." Tomasello suggests that the formation of cultural groups and the difference between "us" and "them" brought about the need for education (ibid., pp. 96–97). Interestingly, even the youngest children try to teach, which involves a duality of equality and hierarchy. Tomasello notes that children use "normative language" to their peers, such as "one must put it here" and objectification, such as "it goes here" (ibid., pp. 97). This is already education that refers to the customary "we," but concurrently it is an act of assuming the position of representing authority. Education promotes an equal "we" and concurrently empowers a teaching person to embody the authority of "we."

As described above, Tomasello takes the interaction in joint attention as a starting point and then reveals the relationality and community unique to human beings. He argues that during interactions, humans constantly form a second-personal "we," out of which they create fixed institutions and objectivities. This also demonstrates that institutions and cultures are never static but are shaped by interaction and influenced by "second-personal protest." As Tomasello himself suggests, the resistance against disrespect argued by Axel Honneth in *The Struggle for Recognition* is also a struggle over

"we" (Tomasello 2016, p. 72; see also Honneth 1992). While assuming a "we," people reform the way "we" are (who is included in "we," what constitutes a fair evaluation, what equality means, etc.) as equal members of society or as individuals demanding a fair evaluation of their own role[6]. This is where the diversity of human society comes from. However, some questions remain unanswered, such as how the scope of "we" is decided and how relationships between "us" and "them" are established. To begin with, can "we" function independently?

Here I would like to go beyond Tomasello's argument and consider that there is a transitional state between the shared intentionality and the earlier stage, and that the two are often intertwined. In discussing forms of learning, Tomasello (2000) distinguishes between "ontogenetic ritualization," which is also found in chimpanzees, and "imitative learning," which is unique to humans. Ritualization is a form of learning in which two organisms shape "each other's behavior through repeated instances of social interaction" without sharing intentions (p. 31). Certain rituals are established through the repetition of interactions such as the infant performing an action and the mother responding to it. This is learning through emotional coordination, which is characteristic of the binary relationship prior to joint attention. Imitative learning, on the other hand, is a form of learning to reproduce the actions of others based on an understanding of their intentions.

However, as Tomasello himself argues, an infant's pointing, for example, can be either imitative learning or ritualization in response to an adult's action (ibid., pp. 87–89). Indeed, even when we think we have a shared intention, this is often not the case. In many cases, ritualization and imitative learning are intertwined. This is also true of collaborative activities. Tomasello (2016) emphasized that even when chimpanzees cooperate to forage for food, they do not share the same goal. It is not a "we," he says, but a "group behavior in I-mode" (p. 27), which is simply coordination between individuals. However, since many collaborations are supported by emotional coordination, "we" and "I-mode" seem to be intertwined.

This will lead to a rethinking of "we." There may be myriad holes in Tomasello's

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[6] Tomasello's argument overlaps considerably with that of Honneth. Tomasello (2016) regards the resistance to disrespect in Honneth's discussion as presupposing a "we" (p. 72). Honneth (2012) also refers to Tomasello in *Reification,* in which he argues for the priority of "emotional attachment or identification" over cognition of objects (pp. 42–45). However, Honneth (1992) refers to Winnicott and discusses the process by which the infant moves from a state of fusion, through the destruction of objects, to the recognition of others (SS. 153–172). He thus focuses on a transitional state between sympathetic concern and joint attention. This perspective is not so evident in Tomasello. However, Honneth does not emphasize the peculiar forms of relationality and recognition in illusion as much. In exploring this point, this report takes Winnicott's argument in a different direction than Honneth's.

"we," and "we" may be intertwined with and filled by different levels of relationality. However, I do not have the expertise to examine this point through empirical research. Here, I explore the developmental theory of psychoanalysis, specifically Winnicott's arguments, to discuss how infants come to share intentionality with others. This is because Winnicott discusses this process in terms of illusion and playing, demonstrating a different level of relationality than "we." Indeed, Tomasello's argument and psychoanalysis have different origins and levels, and it may be inappropriate to link them. However, attempts to integrate the psychoanalytic debate with infant research since the 1980s are ongoing[7]. In particular, Jessica Benjamin (1995) links the work of Daniel N. Stern and others to Winnicott's argument (pp. 81–115). With these attempts in mind, let us examine the relationality in Winnicott's developmental theory.

3. Illusion and Playing: Winnicott's Theory of Development

Freud also addressed the question of how a community with morals and norms came into being. In *Totem and Taboo* (1912), he constructed the myth of prehistoric patricide as the origin of morality and community. According to Freud (2000 [1912–1913]), prehistoric men formed small groups in which the strongest male occupied all women as the father. The sons collaborated to kill and eat their father. Consequently, they were torn between the two extremes of emotion: hostility and love for their father. They began to feel guilty to resolve this division. After that, they formed a "male coalition" comprising "members with equal rights" and established taboos. Guilt over the absent father made it possible for them to recognize other people and maintain a normative community of equals (SS. 424–430).

Freud's narrative is peculiar, but it demonstrates a general scheme in which the conflict between primordial love and hostility is transformed into guilt, resulting in the recognition of others. This scheme was further developed by Melanie Klein as an infant's phantasy. According to Klein, through conflict over a good object (good breast) and a bad object (bad breast), an infant develops a sense of guilt for aggression and begins to recognize the mother as a holistic object (Likierman 2001, pp. 100–135; see also Klein 1984). Klein viewed the process of recognizing the other and sharing reality with others

[7] For example, Anne Alvarez (1992) draws on the work of Colwyn Trevarthen, Daniel N. Stern, and others to present a new theory and technique of psychoanalytic intervention with autistic, abused, and other children.

as the development of a phantasy. Contrastingly, Winnicott discussed this process through the interaction between the infant and mother, similar to Tomasello's approach. However, Winnicott focuses on the transitional area preceding the sharing of intentionality. The central issue is the conflict of recognizing the other as possessing an inner reality distinct from one's own. Winnicott discussed this transitional area in terms of illusion and playing, both of which are riddled with contradictions[8].

First, we provide an overview of Winnicott's developmental theories. He discusses infant development from three perspectives: integration, personalization and object-relating (realization)[9]. According to Winnicott, an infant is initially an unintegrated being whose experiences are fragmented. What protects the infant is care such as holding, warm wrapping, and bathing, as well as the caregiver's gaze, which brings together the infant's experiences. Winnicott refers to these as "holding" or the "holding environment." Supported by "holding," the infant can remain unintegrated in a comfortable state and occasionally develop an integrative "I," despite the threats posed by internal instincts and external invasions. This forms the basis for the "True Self" outside communication[10]. Next, in personalization, the coordination of body and mind is established, and the psyche becomes "indwelling in the soma" (Winnicott 2018, p. 45). This is facilitated by the "handling" as initial playing. As the infant and others (the mother) are brought together at the same wavelength and engage in various interactions, a distinction between the self and others is established. This fosters a sense of "I am." Finally, when others (the mother) repeatedly present an object (breast), the infant foresees that others have an inner world, and steps into a reality that can be shared with others[11].

It is important to note that this process occurs in the earliest stages and is not a linear

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[8] I have discussed Winnicott's arguments regarding illusion and playing at length in another article (Shibuya 2021). The following discussion summarizes this and adds some new perspectives.

[9] In "Primitive Emotional Development," Winnicott formulated the tasks that the infant faces (Winnicott 2014, pp. 145–156). In later years, he argues how the infant is encouraged by their environment (Winnicott 2018, pp. 56–63). Here, I integrate and reconfigure these two aspects.

[10] According to Winnicott (2018), infants form the "True Self" in the illusion of omnipotence when they are raised in "facilitating environments." However, if they are required early to adapt to reality in inadequate environments, they develop the "False Self" through compliance. It is a patchwork self that lacks a sense of reality and wholeness (pp. 140–152). Contrastingly, the "True Self" is usually hidden and engaged with subjective objects (which are one with the subject in illusion) outside of communication. Winnicott believed that such a self is the source of the sense of reality (ibid., pp. 179-192).

[11] Winnicott's theory of development overlaps with that of Daniel Stern (2000). The "I" formed in unintegration can be said to correspond to "the sense of an emergent self" that perceives the world through "vitality affects" and "amodal perceptions." Personalization and "I am" correspond to "the sense of a core self" that constitutes a coherent self. Object-relating may correspond to "the sense of a subjective self" and "affect attunement" in which the infant shares emotions with others.

sequence of steps. Rather, it is an overlapping, back-and-forth process that unfolds over a considerable period[12]. Further, the infant is "an immature being who is all the time *on the brink of unthinkable anxiety*" and is threatened by preverbal anxieties such as "going to pieces" or "falling forever" (Winnicott 2018, pp. 57–58). Despite facing these crises, the infant, supported by holding, handling, and presenting-objects, forms a "True Self" and also encounter the world of others. Winnicott views this first encounter as an "illusion" that is neither real nor delusional but a primordial form of relationality.

Compared with topics such as delusions, fantasies, and dreams, illusions have been set aside in the development of psychoanalysis. However, this does not imply that illusions have not yet been discussed. In his later work, *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud (2000 [1927]) interpreted religion and God the Father as illusions. According to him, illusion ignores reality and provides momentary comfort, whereas delusion is anti-reality. Freud argued that humans, feeling powerless in the face of nature's reality, created the illusion of an order-giving God, or father, to find temporary solace. His conclusion was that humanity should break through the illusion of God and listen to the subtle voice of reason to advance intellectual inquiry (S. 186). This reflects Freud's heroic gesture of breaking free from the false refuge of God.

However, Winnicott's perspective contrasts with Freud's. Winnicott focuses on the illusion of union with the mother, which precedes the illusion of God, or father, and examines how this illusion forms the basis of shared reality. What matters here are the gaps that inevitably intrude before an infant's perspective is pluralized and shared with others. This involves the struggle to recognize that others have different intentions and worlds[13]. Benjamin argues that this approach subverts Freud's patriarchal framework.

The illusion of union with the mother inevitably accompanies the process of separation insofar as the mother plays a central nurturing role. According to Benjamin (1995), when this illusion is successfully navigated, the mother can be recognized as the other. However, in cases of failure, the mother's power is transferred to the father, resulting in the dehumanization of the mother and the creation of the illusion that God or

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[12] Winnicott believes that the processes of integration, personalization and object-relating occur before the age of five or six months. He also states that it is during this period that infants come to understand that others have inner lives.

[13] Illusions are usually recognized only after differences from reality have been noticed. In this sense, illusion always precedes reality and is only discerned afterward, once the shared reality with others is acknowledged. However, the illusion that Winnicott addresses exists in the intermediate area between fantasy and reality, that is, before the full development of reality-testing, or in a state where both singular and plural perspectives are present simultaneously. If we understand illusion in this way, we can argue that the establishment of shared reality inevitably involves this potential illusion.

father provides protection and order (pp. 96–97). The terror of nature and reality that gives rise to the illusion of God is itself the product of a failure to confront reality. Thus, Freud's heroic gestures mask this failure by defeating the illusion. Contrastingly, Winnicott revisits the primal illusion, not to defeat it but to explore how to play with it and come to terms with it. Now, let us delve into Winnicott's narrative of illusion.

In "Primitive Emotional Development" (1945), the primal relationship between infant and mother is described as a "moment of illusion." According to Winnicott, although infants and their mothers interact, their inner worlds do not intersect[14]. However, if the mother repeatedly offers the breast to the infant when the infant desires it and tries to create it within his or her inner world, a "moment of illusion" occurs, in which the infant's world and the mother's world overlap. Winnicott writes:

> I think of the process as if two lines came from opposite directions, liable to come near each other. If they overlap, there is a moment of illusion—a bit of experience which the infant can take as either as his hallucination or as a thing belonging to external reality. (Winnicott 2014, p. 152)

As Thomas H. Ogden (2018) notes regarding this passage, Winnicott suggests that the overlapping of the two lines is ultimately an illusion, but in this illusion a specific relationship emerges (pp. 225–229). In this illusion, the infant creates the breast, feels united with it, and simultaneously has slight contact with the world of the mother who brings the breast into being. This is not an undifferentiated fusion. As Benjamin (1995) argues, the infant is beginning to realize that the mother has a different intentionality and world. In attempting to reject this reality, the infant perceives the illusion of union and omnipotence. That is to say, the illusion of union is created afterwards in the tension between separation and rejection, and the infant anticipates the other person's different world within this illusion. Moreover, when this tension is disrupted, the infant may become entangled in a relationship of domination and subjugation, faced with a choice between the fantasy of omnipotence and the powerlessness of the self (pp. 89–93)[15].

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[14] Drawing on recent developmental studies, Benjamin (2018) argues that a rhythm emerges in the interaction between the infant and the mother, which does not belong to either side. She conceptualizes this rhythm as the "rhythmic Third," which can be the locus of primordial recognition (p. 30). Furthermore, Benjamin suggests that this "rhythmic Third" develops into the "differentiating Third," in which individuals engage with others while recognizing their differences (ibid., pp. 21–48).

[15] Benjamin suggests that Freud and other (male) psychoanalysts fell into this trap. Winnicott believed that the tension between the illusion of union and the reality of separation is maintained in playing. Perhaps he saw this tension as essential for fostering individual freedom, creativity, and the recognition of

In this sense, illusion is a form of a slight relationship in which the fusion and difference between the self and others are intertwined. Here, the worlds of the infant and the mother are related in a misaligned way. This illusory sense of togetherness forms the foundation for the infant's experience of "living together." In this way, Winnicott found an intermediate area between infants and mothers where the fusion and differentiation remain indeterminate. For Winnicott, this is not simply something to overcome but constitutes a space of its own. He later conceptualizes it as a "potential space" and understands it as a place for playing. What emerges there as a successor to the illusory breast is the "transitional object," such as scraps of blankets and tattered dolls to which children have a special attachment. Winnicott (2005) defines it as the first "'not-me' possession"—an ambiguous intermediate term between inside and outside (pp. 1–34). By playing with a transitional object, infants or young children develop an illusion in an unintegrated state and take a half-step into a world shared with others. At that time, it is important not to threaten the ambiguity of the transitional object. Winnicott says that we should refrain from asking the question, "Did you conceive this or was it presented to you from outside?" (ibid., p. 17). This is because if we make a clear distinction between the inside and outside and determine their origin and ownership, the potential space disappears and the transitional object is broken.

The play discussed here is not the type of game Tomasello discusses, which is based on shared rules or role exchange[16]. Instead, it involves children manipulating their toys in the presence of another person. Winnicott presents the images of this playing as the interaction of the surfaces of two curtains or two jugs, with reference to Marion Milner (Winnicott 2005, p. 132). On one hand, there is a movement that develops an isolated world without knowing the outside; on the other hand, there are moments when this movement slightly intersects with the other world.

Let us examine an example of such a play by Winnicott. For example, Edmund, aged two and a half years, at first asked "Where's toys?" but then never said a word. he

differences with others.

[16] Tomasello occasionally refers to children's play. Play in his discussion is a game with shared intentions and norms, or early symbolic play in which intentions are first shared and then extracted (Tomasello 2000, pp. 84–85). Further, Tomasello (2014) finds the evolutionary origins of pretend play in "pantomiming as a serious communicative activity." He suggests that pretend play originally evolved from gesture language for conveying information (pp. 63–64). It was through these "young children's joint pretense" that rule games were established (ibid., pp. 91). Tomasello considers the transmission of information and the sharing of intentions as essential aspects that precede play. For him, play is only secondary. Contrastingly, Winnicott links playing to illusion as a precursor to the sharing of intentions and discusses it as the basis for a shared reality.

sat on his mother's lap or played silently with toys while Winnicott talked to his mother. Initially, he played cautiously; then he began blowing bubbles into his mouth and became preoccupied with the string he had brought from another room. He then moved back and forth toward his mother. Winnicott did not directly engage with Edmund. He was just there. But not without a relationship. He writes, "As it happened I was there mirroring what was taking place and thus giving it a quality of communication" (ibid., p. 59).

What we have here is a different picture from that of collaborative activities involving joint intentionality. This child does not share the same intentionality or goals as the adults around him. They are "together" in the same place from different perspectives. In this circumstance, the toddler is in a relaxed and unintegrated state, and develops illusions using the transitional object of the string as the medium. The adults who watch over him become the environment for the toddler, feeling that the toddler is anticipating the world of others. Indeed, there was communication. Nevertheless, it is a communication involving irrelevance, in which the toddler forms a "True Self" outside of communication. In this process, the toddler acquires the "capacity to be alone."

Of course, young children will eventually emerge from the illusion, acknowledge that their world differs from that of others, and enter reality, sharing intentionality with others. The transitional object also survives, albeit under intense attack. It then serves its purpose and is no longer being examined. However, it does not simply disappear:

> It is not forgotten, and it is not mourned. It loses meaning, and this is because the transitional phenomenon have become diffused, have become spread out over the whole of the intermediate territory between 'inner psychic reality' and 'the external world as perceived by two persons in common.' That is to say, over the whole cultural field. (ibid., p. 7)

The transitional object is not simply lost but becomes diffusely spread throughout the cultural field. This implies that the themes of illusion and playing are not confined to infancy. What Winnicott stated is that behind a culture that is based on shared reality and "common-ground," there exists a vast realm of illusion that remains slightly relational (illusory culture). Illusions give rise to countless gaps in images and connections outside cultural norms. In fact, even within the "we," individuals are constantly alone and developing illusions. Only when a small part of such illusions takes shape and is shared can the culture of "we" be constructed. If this is true, then illusion becomes the foundation of the "we" and the source of cultural creation and human freedom.

Conclusion

Through examining the differences between humans and other great apes, Tomasello argues that the relationality and community of “we” are formed in collaborative activities involving joint intentionality. As a “supraindividual entity,” “we” governs the relationship between “I” and “you,” forming the basis for a sense of equality and the foundation of culture. Contrastingly, Winnicott found a peculiar intermediate area between joint attention and emotional coordination. In this area, the infant experiences the illusion in which the fusion and difference between the self and others are intertwined. Through this illusion, the infant comes into slight contact with the world of others. Eventually, this area becomes a space of playing, intertwined with “we” and spreading into the background of culture. This aspect of Winnicott’s argument serves as a starting point for thinking about creativity and freedom among humans.

Certainly, Winnicott’s arguments are more concerned with care than education. Nevertheless, it can be argued that education not only establishes a “common-ground,” but is also closely intertwined with care, and that illusion and playing continually haunt the workings of education. In addition to social norms, equality, and authority, human nature includes caring, playing, and engaging in illusions. These elements are constantly intertwined and contribute to human diversity.

In *The Dawn of Everything* (2022), David Graeber and David Wengrow attempt to demonstrate that human beings have exercised their social freedom in playful ways from their earliest beginnings. The authors suggest that prehistoric hunter-gatherers experimented with a variety of social relationships. According to the authors, there is no single form of human nature. Humans have moved, cared for, supported each other, made promises, fought, teased others, and connected with diverse others while inventing various social relationships[17]. Could we not consider the realm of illusion and playing, as

[17] Graeber and Wengrow’s aim is to explore why human intrinsic freedoms (the freedom to relocate, the freedom to disobey, the freedom to shape new social realities) have been diminished and linked to the domination of others. They suggest that this question involves “the profound ambivalence (…) of (…) caring relationships” (Graeber & Wengrow 2022, p. 191). Presumably, the caring relationships are transformed when responsibility for care, once confined to a particular relationship, is transferred to those who have no connection with the cared-for individual. Slaves exemplify this transformation. According to Graeber and Wengrow, slaves can be seen as those who are forcibly separated from social ties through violence with the aim of producing caregivers (ibid., pp. 502–514). In this context, the caregiver is perceived as “them” within “us,” with whom the cared-for individual does not have to share a common perspective. Consequently, a domination-subjugation relationship is established, and freedom becomes

Winnicott showed, as giving rise to such human diversity and freedom, from which a new "we" always emerges?

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synonymous with domination. This link between caring and domination can be understood as involving a failure to maintain the delicate balance between fusion and separation in the illusion.

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