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Reviews

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REVIEWS

Graves, Donald H. *The Energy to Teach*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

Dale Jacobs, University of Windsor

It was nearing the end of the semester as I read *The Energy to Teach* by Donald Graves. I was reading it for a review I had agreed to write early in January, at the *beginning* of the semester, when my energy was still high and adding another task to an already busy term seemed more than possible. As the end of the semester approached, however, this additional task seemed more and more onerous, an energy-draining item on a to-do list that seemed to grow by the day. A funny thing happened, though, as I read *The Energy to Teach*; I began to think about why I was feeling so drained. Such reflective thinking, encouraged by Graves throughout the book, led me to consider not only what I could do to remedy the situation for myself, but also what I could do to extend and connect this very necessary conversation about teaching and energy to similar dialogues occurring elsewhere in the profession. Suddenly this review seemed much less onerous, moving from the category of energy-draining to that of energy-giving.

Aimed mainly at K-12 teachers, *The Energy to Teach* is built around the premise that teaching is emotional work that demands high energy. As Graves puts it, “Emotional roller coasters demand energy—high energy—and you need to know how to maximize what gives you energy and minimize what takes it away. You need the energy to teach” (2). The rest of the book, then, is an attempt to help teachers think about “what gives you energy; takes it away; and what for you is a waste of time” (4). After outlining his general ideas about energy and teaching in Chapter One, Graves moves on in Chapter Two to a series of reflective activities designed to help teachers think about the key questions of what gives and takes away energy. For example, Graves suggests that teachers keep a week’s log of what gives and takes away energy and then write reflectively on their findings. From these kinds of activities, Graves moves on to Chapter Three in which he suggests that teachers set clear personal and professional goals to help them manage the relationship between energy and teaching. Graves’s points, though couched in self-help language that is too often reductive of the complexities of teachers’ lives within specific material circumstances, offer an important invitation to reflective thinking. In this way, it is an important book for teachers and an important spur to further conversation and thinking about the relationship between emotion, energy, and teaching.

Graves begins a conversation that needs, I think, to start with some further exploration of the concept of energy, an idea that is never fully defined in *The Energy to Teach*, and that needs to be theorized in ways that can productively help us to move forward in our thinking. Are there fruitful ways in which some attention to other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, or even physics might

help us to think about this concept? Does Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's work on flow, which Graves briefly mentions, give us a potential way to think about energy? How has this concept been defined in other disciplines and can those definitions be used either literally or analogically as an aid to our own thinking about energy? Would such thinking give us ways to think about energy as a contextual concept? The salient point is that in further defining this important term, we can provide ourselves with ways of thinking about energy and its relationship to both teaching and emotion. In fact, recent work in emotion studies provides an important means of thinking about the issues that Graves raises in *The Energy to Teach*.

Drawing on work from other disciplines has been one of the most important ways in which people in both composition and education have begun to think about emotions in new and important ways. As we have learned from our colleagues in sociology, for example, we experience emotions as individuals, but our experiences of those emotions are embedded within social structures and constructed within those structures; in other words, we cannot think about emotions outside of their social contexts. This kind of theorizing—moving beyond common sense definitions—is essential when thinking about emotion, especially in its practical connections to teaching and energy. By thinking about the ways in which emotion, energy, and teaching are imbricated within specific social contexts, we can begin to think about how to promote the kinds of fundamental change that Graves points towards in *The Energy to Teach*, thereby providing us with ways to think collectively about institutional change within our professional contexts. As Laura Micciche and I note in *A Way to Move: Rhetorics of Emotion and Composition Studies*,

in addition to its conventional understanding as a term that denotes expression of feeling, or affective response to a situation, we want to suggest that emotion also enables and disables change. In particular, we are interested in emotion's capacity to construct a culture of movement in opposition to one of ossification . [. . .] How does emotion shape the work of teachers and administrators in Composition Studies? How are we schooled to use emotion in our professional lives? What is the place of emotion, for example, in our various professional relationships—with students, colleagues, research subjects, administrators, and/or advisees? (2-3)

In focusing on energy, Graves tackles similar questions that serve as reflective starting points for important conversations about teaching. The relationship between energy and emotion that Graves touches on in the book is an incredibly productive site for future research and thinking.

For the most part, the remainder of the book explores specific sources of energy creation and drain in relation to teaching. Such chapters include classroom structures (Chapter Four), curriculum (Chapter Five), colleagues (Chapter Six), learning (Chapter Seven), assessment (Chapter Eight), parents (Chapter Nine), and principals (Chapter Thirteen). Reading these chapters provides the opportunity to reflect on the impact each of these elements has on one's teaching life. In addition, each of these short chapters has the potential to act as a starting point from which further research and conversation about these important issues can be generated. In Chapter Six, for example, Graves discusses the energy-giving and energy-draining potential of relationships with colleagues. Graves writes,

Strangely, the less time we have, the more we ignore emotions and stick to facts rooted in either policy, or “this is the way we’ve handled this in the past.” Policy and history are important and do help us in making decisions. Still, we need to identify and share the feelings attendant to a decision. When people walk away from a meeting carrying unresolved feelings, they begin to know firsthand what it means to be personally and professionally isolated. (60)

He goes on to say that “teachers expressed how draining professional isolation felt for them,” but how “clear emotional exchange brought renewed energy” (61). In reading this passage, I was struck by the clear connections that could be made between Graves’s argument and Alison Jaggar’s idea of “outlaw emotions.” Jaggar writes,

When unconventional emotional responses are experienced by isolated individuals, those concerned may be confused, unable to name their experience; they may even doubt their own sanity [. . .]. When certain emotions are shared or validated by others, however, the basis exists for forming a subculture defined by perceptions, norms, and values. By constituting the basis for such a subculture, outlaw emotions may be politically (because epistemologically) subversive. (180)

Jaggar’s text gives us the language of intervention that can help us to move beyond the damaging situation that Graves outlines and towards a situation of not only “renewed energy,” but also fundamental change. Using theoretical ideas such as those found in Jaggar’s work, we can use *The Energy to Teach* as a productive starting point from which to work on further questions regarding the relationship among emotion, energy, and teaching. In thinking deeply about these questions, we can work collectively first to define the term “energy” and then to build energy, as Graves outlines in the book.

The Energy to Teach is a book that all teachers should read, particularly when they are feeling without energy, perhaps even perilously close to burn-out. In its invitations to self-reflection, every teacher will benefit from thinking about his or her own teaching practices and teaching conditions and how they relate to both emotion and energy. Just as importantly, however, *The Energy to Teach*, in its examinations of the variety of institutional contexts and relationships involved in teaching, provides a much needed spur towards more research and conversation into important collective issues in our profession with regard to energy, emotion, and teaching. ☺

Works Cited

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Pat Belanoff et al., eds. *Writing with Elbow*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2002.

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This collection of perceptive essays, though uneven at times, contributes to a strong current of progressive thinking that Peter Elbow's work has come, over the past thirty years, to symbolize. In her Foreword, Ann Berthoff defines Elbow positively as a Romantic Pragmatist, whose work "can help us to defend ourselves against gangster theories" (ix-x). And in a reprinted review, Ken Macrorie comments that Elbow's *Embracing Contraries* (1986), beyond its announced intention to explore the nature of learning and teaching, is really "a manual on how to be wise" (qtd. in Belanoff xiv). In pursuit of such an undercurrent of wisdom, Elbow borrows from William Blake the principle that "without contraries is no progression." For Elbow, contraries such as spontaneity and discipline in the writing process are elements of a rich "dialectic of experience." And, as all readers of Elbow know, he defines the intellectual enterprise itself as a dialectic of the "doubting game" and the "believing game," which we "play" by engaging in "binary thinking"—the ability to balance spontaneous "first-order" thinking with "second-order" analytical or critical thinking. Success is attained, as the essays in this book testify, by engaging with each element separately at first (e.g., doubting then believing) before attempting to integrate them in the processes of writing and thinking. Divided into four "Clusters," each introduced by an editorial "Intersection," the book reads like the proceedings of an exhilarating symposium on Elbow's influence on education.

In "Cluster I: Contextualizing and Categorizing," introduced by Pat Belanoff, Richard Boyd deconstructs the growing criticism that Elbow's thought is apolitical. In the context of a century of authoritarian educational practices that preceded it, *Writing without Teachers* (1973) is a radical document, originating from Elbow's work in the 1960s as a draft counselor advising young men about conscientious objector status. To write convincing applications, draft-eligible men needed to become aware of their real beliefs. Because Elbow's methods helped them to articulate these beliefs, their letters to draft boards were acts with profound political implications. In another act of contextualizing, Thomas Newkirk argues that the culture of English studies implicitly "creates its own sense of elitism [. . .] by treating as a defective 'other' the popular discourses [. . .] in the wider culture" (28)—discourses which Elbow's methodology seeks to cultivate. By placing him in the context of larger movements in English studies—modernism, antimodernism, and postmodernism—Elizabeth Flynn, like Boyd, sees "Elbow's earlier work [as] radical" adding that "his later work parallels the autobiographical and postmodern turns within composition studies, feminist studies, and the humanities as a whole" (77). A dialogue between Edward White and Shane Borrowman has some of the virtues as well as inchoate qualities of live conversation, making the point that Elbow's status as an icon of expressivism can be helpful as well as limiting to practitioners.

The essays in "Cluster II: Exploring Contraries," introduced by Charles

Moran, are of focal importance for the book. In an astute defense of critical pedagogy, C.H. Knoblauch and Lil Brannon argue that Elbow himself is inconsistent with his own principles in his critique of the American followers of Paulo Freire. Critical pedagogy ought to have “its half of the bed” with social expressivist theory, they argue, in the practice of education. Countering Elbow’s own argument in “Pedagogy of the Bamboozled” (in *Embracing Contraries*) they propose a holistic balance of the two theories, which Elbow himself seems to disallow. In an essay that most explicitly supports Macrorie’s claim about Elbow as a guide to wisdom, George Kalamaras forms an analogy between Elbow’s theory and the meditative traditions of Eastern thought, where “embracing contraries yields a consciousness nonattached to either pole of an apparent contradiction [e.g., yin and yang in Chinese philosophy], but, rather, a deepening attentiveness to their reciprocal interaction” (64). By analogy with ordinary language philosophy, in what is perhaps the most abstract essay in the volume, Thomas O’Donnell explores “new uses of doubting,” claiming that “doubt need not unleash efforts to disprove” someone’s argument, but can instead play “a phenomenological role” in responding to another’s words. In exploring Elbow’s “uneasy debt” to philosopher Michael Polanyi, M. Elizabeth Sargent points to Polanyi’s concept of “indwelling” as a key to Elbow’s advocacy of freewriting. According to Polanyi “we pour ourselves into [our tools]” and “accept them existentially by dwelling in them,” so for Elbow freewriting is “pouring yourself into the act of writing, indwelling the tool” (101). For Polanyi “our use of language is itself sufficient to reveal that belief is the crucial and primary power of the human mind” (96). Though he appears to place belief on an equal footing with doubt, in practice (particularly his articulation of the way freewriting works to liberate creative impulses) Elbow implicitly accepts Polanyi’s vision of belief as the central power of the mind. According to Sargent, by interpreting believing as merely a “game” and the “tacit dimension” of experience as a kind of “magic” opposed to rationality, Elbow misrepresents Polanyi. But in practice, Elbow’s attempt to balance the doubting and believing games is primarily a way of arriving at belief.

Sheryl I. Fontaine introduces “Cluster III: In the Classroom” in the form of a “found conversation”—combined excerpts from the five essays in the cluster. It’s an interesting and valid experiment in the context of this book, like the White-Borrowman dialogue, and later examples of “collage” by Sondra Perl and in the book’s “Coda.” Exemplifying something like Bakhtin’s theory of “heteroglossia,” these essays may be highly engaging to some readers; others, I suspect, will find them uneven or less satisfying than essays centered in a single thesis. In this Cluster, Keith Hjortshoj argues that the “illusion of academic writing” is “the main obstacle Peter Elbow was trying to move beyond” and “creates some of the most common difficulties student writers encounter” (131). Defending Elbow’s “‘frontier’ pedagogy,” Kathleen Cassity insists that despite his emphasis on “de-centered authority” in the classroom, Elbow really “exerts considerable authority and influence [. . .] but he chooses to exert it over how students behave [. . .] instead of using his authority to ‘rank’ student writing by assigning reductive grades or restricting students to a singular writing style” (129). Irene Papoulis, countering the view that Elbow’s pedagogy is apolitical, argues that, by effectively encouraging the development of personal voice, “Peter’s ideas help countless people deal with their own powerlessness, yet he gets criticized for being less

than political” (171). In the spirit of Elbow’s concept of responding to student writing by giving “movies of the mind,” Jeff Sommers proposes offering spoken comments on audio tape, an idea that many teachers may find very effective. And, finally in this cluster, Kathleen Blake Yancey explores the difficult problems of writing assessment in the light of Elbow’s belief that assessment should always be subordinate to learning.

In “Cluster IV: Voice and the Personal,” with an “Intersection” by Marcia Dickson, Kate Ronald and Hepzibah Roskelley examine Elbow’s use of metaphors like embodied “voice” and numerous references to erotic experience in his “physical rhetoric.” “Elbow’s connection between the unique individual body and the writer’s voice [. . .] seems to insist that a writer must show herself, expose herself, give herself” (212). The satisfaction Elbow wishes his students to have in writing “involves merging, especially in terms of feeling the skin or being inside the skin of another” (217). Exploring further the theme of voice and the personal, Anne Herrington argues for the legitimacy of what Elbow calls “discourse that renders experience,” that tells “what it’s like to be me or to live my life” (224). Counter to most current trends in academic writing, Herrington advocates “rendering” (as distinct from explaining) personal experience as a legitimate and vital part of research. Implicitly supporting Herrington’s view, poet Wendy Bishop insists on embracing the contraries of the creative and the academic. And Sondra Perl presents a collage of personal letters to and from Peter, on such topics as “process,” “sexuality,” “agency,” and “condescension.” In her informal essay, Perl articulates her own and Peter’s affinity with philosopher Eugene Gendlin, the author of *Focusing*, arguing that “language and meaning arise together by paying attention to felt sense” (261).

This volume appeared the year before the thirtieth anniversary edition of *Writing without Teachers* (2003), testifying to the nearly unparalleled reach of Elbow’s influence in the field of writing instruction. Though I suspect few readers will find equal satisfaction in all of the eighteen essays in this book, writing instructors with a natural affinity for the Elbow school of expressivist thought, among whom I count myself, will eat its words with relish, learn a great deal about the theoretical background of Elbow’s germinal ideas, and pick up numerous useful tips for teaching practice. Opponents of the Elbow school will find fuel for more grousing about its counter-cultural approaches to academic standards and academic discourse. But, if the essays in this book are a testament, the usefulness and legitimacy of Elbow’s theories for student development and teacher formation are subject to little real dispute. ☞

Hocking, Brent, Johnna Haskell, and Warren Linds, eds. *Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility Through Education*. Foundations of Holistic Education 4. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2001.

Sue Hum, University of Texas at San Antonio

Unfolding Bodymind consists of 17 expanded conference presentations, the proceedings of the 1999 Bodymind Conference, which involved 70 attendees from Europe, Australia, Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Held at the Botanical Gardens at the University of British Columbia, the conference featured an opening address and blessing by Elder Vincent Stogan, Sr. (Tsimalano) from the local Musqueam Nation and keynote speeches by David Abram and David Jardine.

The conference presenters in this collection challenge four major trends in education: Cartesian dualism, which advocates bracketing out the body in order to minimize its corrupting influence on the mind; education as a closed, hermetically sealed system whereby students' learning can be most effectively maximized through direct and linear instruction; teachers' tendencies to treat knowledge as a stable, fact-driven commodity that can be isolated and transferred; and the goals of education that privilege instrumentalism (learning must be useful and relevant) and progressivism (learning must lead to tangible, measurable improvements).

The essays, both individually and jointly, explore education as an ecological, holistic, and embodied process. Learning, then, consists of an "unfolding" or emergent process, so that knowledge is created when students come to, not an understanding, but an interstanding. These essays, about half of which are written by doctoral candidates, resist mainstream processes and practices of learning by experimenting with narratives, anecdotes, analogy, and poetry to argue the importance of "knowing in action." Some authors also emphasize the illogical nature of emotions and senses through imagistic, performative, and expressive writing styles, eschewing the restrictive, traditional conventions of writing. In addition, some contributors challenge the accepted formats of codex books, experimenting with the arrangement of words on a page, font size, and various type styles, investigating how these might contribute to alternative epistemologies.

The essays in *Unfolding Bodymind* draw from an assortment of theoretical frameworks and intellectual traditions, ranging from philosophers John Dewey and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, anthropologists Gregory Bateson and Mary Catherine Bateson, cognitive biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, and Buddhist spiritualists Ted Aoki and Deepak Chopra. The essays also address a variety of disciplines, including second language acquisition; nursing; contemplative philosophy; teaching; and science, civic, environmental, and moral educations. The book is divided into four sections, each beginning with a framing "conversation" among the three editors that seeks to create a coherence among the essays within that section. Also, each essay is prefaced with a biography of the author, essay abstract, key terms, and acknowledgements.

Much to my disappointment, these conference proceedings fail to contribute to an existing body of rigorously conceptualized scholarship on embodied, material learning. By over-emphasizing the emotional, ecological, and performative styles—a limited and limiting formulation of embodied learning—these essays do not establish a robust reciprocity between bodies and minds, emotions and reason, materiality and discourse. Yet, I have provided a detailed summary for readers who might enjoy this imagistic, anecdotal, and associative collection of essays.

In Section One, “Turning Together on Paths of Awareness,” the four contributors explore learning as a process of “unfoldment,” enabled through diverse modes of interaction including drama exercises, scuba diving, and Japanese proverbs. Emphasizing the importance of risk, fear, and improvisation as a fundamental characteristic of learning, these primarily descriptive essays allude to some ways in which performative forms of knowing can challenge conventional learning boundaries and structures. These essays are primarily descriptive, relying on the authors’ experiences to demonstrate the importance of connecting body and mind in education. Through his experiences with the Theatre of the Oppressed, Warren Linds, in “Wondering through a Hall of Mirrors... A Meander through Drama Facilitation,” argues Merleau-Ponty’s concept of embodied action, an emergent, kinesthetic learning that occurs spontaneously “as people play and interplay with each other, finding and filling spaces for dialogue and interaction” (26). In an argument by analogy, Frank Bob Kull, in “A Scuba Class Holistic Teaching/Learning through Lived Experience...or how I dove into the sea and surfaced in academia,” describes how his experience of teaching scuba diving underpins his investment in a pedagogy through modeling. By mimicking Kull’s example, students gain “street knowledge,” a knowledge developed through experience and trial-and-error, thus constituting a new way of being and behaving. In “Co-emerging in the Second Language Research Process: What It Means to Research What It’s Like,” John Ippolito explains how his study of second language acquisition in a particular ESL conversation activity was “productively derailed,” not only because he failed to take into account the role of the discoverer in the data collection and interpretation processes, but also because a study is necessarily shaped by its research participants. In “When the Wind Blows, the Barrel Maker Gets Busy,” Marylin Low and Maria McKay anchor their perspective—education is ecological—in an ancient Japanese proverb about the interconnectedness of seemingly unrelated events. They share four separate anecdotes concerning the tensions American teachers experience in soliciting input on assessment from Japanese students.

In Section Two, “Embodying ‘Pedagogical Possibilities’: Teaching Being, Being Teaching,” four contributors explore the languages of embodiment, particularly mindful relationships, placefulness, and embodied awareness. Here, embodied mindfulness underscores how teachers’ and students’ bodies change as they teach and learn, and, through those changes, call forth new worlds. In “Beyond the Educated Mind: Towards a Pedagogy of Mindfulness,” Heesoon Bai draws on Buddhist meditation techniques to resist education’s ritualized form of pattern-recognition-naming, which preempts a sensuous contact and engagement with the world. Rather, mindfulness helps students recover the non-conceptual awareness of the world, illustrated in Bai’s discussion of environmental and civic education. In “How Do They Learn to Be Whole? A Strategy for Helping Preservice

Teachers Develop Dispositions,” Genét Simone Kozik-Rosabal describes a Personal Process Transformation Exercise, through which student teachers develop a reflective professional conscience, grounded in a reciprocity between their professional and personal lives. Ronald L. Burr and Sherry L. Hartman, in “Bodymind Learning: Interdisciplinary Conversations on Campus,” record a written conversation between a comparative philosopher and a professor in nursing about how tai chi encourages reflection in two classes—Holistic Nursing and Contemplative Theories and Practices. Alison Pryer, in “Breaking Hearts: Towards an Erotics of Pedagogy,” defines eros as the fecund, nontechnical-rational energy that creates and maintains strong human bonds required for people to survive individually and collectively. Pryer concludes by calling for “an ecological, non-dualistic ethic of embodiment and holistic educational theory and practice” (141).

In Section Three, “Education and Culture: Experiencing Im/Possibility,” four presenters critique the general propensity for pedagogy to be disembodied, articulating an enactive approach of “enfleshment,” where bodies shape and are shaped by their learning environments. These essays are grounded in the belief that becoming a “member of a particular culture means embodying a certain sort of body” (147). Pille Bunnell and Kathleen Forsythe, in “The Chains of Hearts: Practical Biology for Intelligent Behavior,” extend Maturana’s work to a Canadian environment, arguing for a *homo sapiens amans*, a loving human being, where teaching intelligence is teaching love. In “Creating a Space for Embodied Wisdom Through Teaching,” James Overboe, who suffers from cerebral palsy, describes how his body’s spasms disrupt the ordered, controlled normality of social identity and systems of educational assessment. In “Merleau-Ponty’s Work and Moral Education: Beyond Mind/Body, Self/Other, and Human/Animal Dichotomies,” Darlene Rigo uses her own past experiences of being forced to eat meat to examine the empathic feelings some children have with animals. She criticizes conventional moral pedagogy for indoctrinating in children a false hierarchy of value and use of animals. In “Educating Nature: On Being Squeamish in Science,” Sonia MacPherson begins by describing how she was forced in a sixth-grade biology class to witness a praying mantis devouring a live butterfly. Just as Buddha taught respect for all sentient beings, MacPherson proposes a woman- and nature-friendly education that does not normalize human violence.

In Section Four, “Ecological Interplay—Humans/Nature in Freefall,” five ecologically based contributions encourage teachers to stop separating theory, practice, and real-life (228). Here, the metaphor “freefall” is used to eschew the familiar so that a fresh and creative perspective can be achieved. Franc Feng, in “Etude in Green Minor: On Expanding Ethics, Of Being, Wholeness, Sentience, and Compassion,” memorializes his gentle, respected scholar father through a narrative methodology, which he proposes might yield a holistic education. By contrast, Lyubov Laroche, in “Back to the Future: Holography as a Postmodern Metaphor for Holistic Science Education,” uses the metaphor of a holographic universe, a model of reality derived from avant-garde science, to imagine a nonmaterial world. In “Unable to Return to the Gods that Made Them,” David Jardine explores experience-as-suffering in ecology, Buddhism, and Gadamer’s hermeneutics. In “Experiencing Unknown Landscapes: Unfolding a Path of Embodied Respect,” Johnna G. Haskell recounts some unexpected moments from an outdoor adventure education classroom to underscore the importance of teaching embodied respect and awareness. Brent Hocking, in “Touched by Gentle

Breezes in Spring: An Ecological View of Renewal in Teaching,” connects notions of embodied cognition with landscape renewals, highlighting how learning is influenced by time, place, and bodies. This anthology concludes with an email correspondence between David Abram and David Jardine, titled “All Knowledge is Carnal Knowledge: A Correspondence.”

Unfortunately, *Unfolding Bodymind* is too narrowly focused on anecdotal personal experience with minimal theoretical conceptualization to offer a constructive proposal for systematically revamping pedagogy and curriculum from a holistic perspective. ☹

Easthope, Anthony. *The Unconscious*. London: Routledge, 1999.

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Why are the British so good at the admirable and under-practiced art of clarifying the abstruse? Anthony Easthope’s *The Unconscious*, a timely and succinct guide to critical theory on the unconscious, exemplifies this apparent cultural gift. *The Unconscious* surveys, and occasionally critiques (in a section on reconciling Freud with Marx), critical theory’s treatment of the unconscious. Fair-minded, knowledgeable, and concise, filled with humorous and poignant examples from personal life and popular culture, Easthope’s book will garner acclaim from graduate students, conference presenters, academic interviewees, intelligent laypeople, and anyone wishing to brush up on Freud, Lacan, Kristeva, and so forth. Easthope is to be commended and recommended for his engaging and lucid treatment of these influential and sometimes notoriously difficult thinkers—not least because he helpfully points out some translation errors.

Easthope’s book is a wonderful work to inspire discussion. Its 178 pages, beginning with the question of the existence of the unconscious, extending to Freud and Lacan, and, in successive chapters, considering the unconscious with respect to the “I,” sexuality, text, and history, is further subdivided and well-indexed. It is a pleasure to read. If his approach were more widely followed in academic writing, critical theory might gain a broader readership.

Obviously in a book covering so many contributors to modern thought on human identity, reduction is unavoidable, and specialists will quibble. Easthope’s clearly non-American perspective will be refreshing to some, possibly offensive to others: he offers the Declaration of Independence as a thought-provoking example of narcissism (157-58), and lists the American bombing of Tokyo and Dresden with Nazi concentration camps among the horrors of the 20th century (165-66). Regardless, most will want a copy of this book.

So What’s Not to Like?

The Unconscious, however, is missing something, an oversight that is not Easthope’s in particular, but critical theory’s in general. What’s missing is a

Jungian perspective, whose loss I can't help but feel is costly and noticeable at this time when, in more than one international arena, actions could well be labeled insane. Like Jung, critical theorists recognize crises like these, but often Jung offers a deeper perspective and more profound suggestions about how humans might endure and confront these horrific challenges. Though no easy panacea, a Jungian spiritual perspective (not a simplistic or anti-scientific one) affords a conception of the unconscious, not just explained and analyzed but felt and experienced. Crucially, Jung offers a model of psychic development—individuation—that I have not found discussed much in critical theory. A Jungian perspective contributes to a more comprehensive, whole-person wisdom—with respect to relations between the sexes, with respect to relations between the ego and the unconscious, with respect to the creative arts, with respect to dreams, even perhaps with respect to the relationship between teacher and student—which critical theory seems to lack.

Readers of *JAEPL* may be surprised that Jung appears nowhere in the bibliography of *The Unconscious*, though he is briefly mentioned in the text (136). For the most part, critical theorists have discarded Jung, much as the social sciences have discarded psychoanalysis, as Easthope points out (143). One major reason may be that they believe, as Easthope says, that Jung saw the psyche as “ahistorical and universal” (136). With regard to universality, we have heard bogus “universals” claimed despite the most obvious race, class, and gender blindness, and we are rightly skeptical. Our differences comprise one truth. However, a certain measure of universality is indisputable, especially at the most basic levels. Jung investigates the ways we are connected and similar as well as the ways in which we differ, which surely gives us a greater panorama than an investigation only of the ways we are disconnected and dissimilar. True, like Freud, Jung often views change in “species time” (Easthope 143) rather than from decade to decade, century to century, or millenium to millenium, but this has some benefits. Jung is not the absolutist he is said to be. The Jungian model deserves more credit for flexibility than it receives. Jung also leaves room for future developments in the relationship between conscious and unconscious. I don't think the description “universal and ahistorical” accurately captures Jung's thought.

A Jungian Perspective Offers a Richer Construction of Unconscious Processes

Returning to Easthope, a contradiction crops up in *The Unconscious* that is undoubtedly one of the pitfalls of discussing the unconscious rationally: a tendency at times to deny “reductive causalism [. . .] outmoded rationalism and scientific materialism” (Jung, *Memories* 4) and yet, at other times, to drift into them. Reading those sections in particular, I felt the lack of a Jungian-like perspective. Easthope critiques “treating anything that is not part of consciousness as physical” (5), but, in an example that arises from his discussion of Darwin's influence on Freud's drive theory, the explanation seems pat and mechanistic: “A human infant shares with other mammals an instinct to seek nourishment at the nipple. [. . .] An idea of or image of the nipple (along with associations of fulfillment) becomes remembered, a signifier which can become pleasurable in its own right—the symbol of the breast”(6). Though none of this explanation is false, it doesn't seem to capture sufficiently experiences of desire or the tremendous impact of

symbols. Similarly, the Oedipus complex, a cornerstone of Freudian and neo-Freudian thought, offers valuable insights but at other times falls woefully short. Easthope suggests Jesus as “The great archetype [of the son] [. . .] subservient to his father,” an undeveloped personality who “never wins through to get another adult woman for himself” (77). Perhaps that is a workable critique for a privileged Westerner living an easy life, but in extreme times many men offer their lives and don’t get to have adult women for themselves. To dismiss human agony and sacrifice with this triviality suggests that, at the time of writing, the writer was disconnected from human suffering.

Compare this to Jung’s much more thoughtful treatment of the Christ myth as a model for the individual’s path to psychic wholeness. He includes a sense of the mystery and awed regard many feel when encountering a Christ myth by portraying it as something serious and numinous: “The Christ symbol is of the greatest psychological importance insofar as it is perhaps the most highly developed and differentiated symbol of the self, apart from the figure of Buddha” (*Basic Writings* 557).

A Jungian Perspective Offers a Deeper, More Convincing Picture of the Relationship between the Ego and the Unconscious

A Jungian perspective offers greater depth when we look at the relationship between ego and the unconscious. Easthope states, with Freud, that “the unconscious seeks pleasure wherever it can [. . .] though it has the problem of finding its way around the surveillance of the conscious mind” (7). Here we have a model of the unconscious as a naughty child, inferior to the conscious, looked down on by the conscious, either indulgently or judgmentally. The conscious, in this model, is always on the lookout for misbehavior in the unconscious, always ready to say “Oh, no, you don’t!” yet always doomed to be duped. Easthope explicitly discusses the extraordinary power of the unconscious, yet this recognition isn’t always sustained. The critical theory paradigm described in *The Unconscious* shows the psyche at war. Easthope tells us the ego is “opposed to the unconscious” (49) and that the ego must “defend against the unconscious, against drives which menace its stability by getting it too excited” (50). In the Freudian model and in several critical theory models, we must never have what we want, or civilization will fall apart because what we want is anti-social.

The Jungian paradigm of the unconscious describes it not solely as a monster to be feared (despite undeniably fearsome qualities and potentials) but also as a guide and partner. He does not deny the anti-social aspects of the unconscious, but he sees its other aspect as well. Perhaps most importantly, Jung offers a model for psychological development. In our potential for individuation, we have a chance of maturing past the “psychic one-sidedness [. . .] typical of the normal man of today” (*Basic Writings* 98). Jung’s model offers the potential for help from the unconscious, the possibility that our limited free will could align with ancient wisdom available to us through the mysterious processes of the unconscious.

Critical theory focuses on change, distortion, misrecognition, and these are important aspects of the human psyche and human interactions. But there are other truths we should not overlook. When a person chooses to speak a dangerous truth rather than the kind of convenient and ego-beneficial lie he or she has been

accustomed to, we need to talk about growth. When therapy helps a person take responsibility and gain a more truthful picture of herself to attain a fuller, yes, more authentic life, I think we can talk about maturation, individuation. Critical theory doesn't address these phenomena enough—or, in many cases, at all. Certainly all of the insights of critical theory hold true with respect to the “fragile, provisional, and unstable” (Easthope 145) nature of the ego self, but there's more picture outside this frame, and we could go further in connecting with it, however imperfect our attempts at description may remain. ☞

Works Cited

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