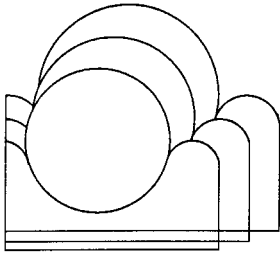


J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

Contemporary Composition Studies: Steps Beyond



J A E P L

The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning

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J A E P L

The Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPL), an official assembly of the National Council of Teachers of English, is open to all those interested in extending the frontiers of teaching and learning beyond traditional disciplines and methodologies.

The purposes of AEPL, therefore, are to provide a common ground for theorists, researchers, and practitioners to explore ideas on the subject; to participate in programs and projects on it; to integrate these efforts with others in related disciplines; to keep abreast of activities along these lines of inquiry; and to promote scholarship and publication of these activities.

The *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning, JAEPL*, meets this need. It provides a forum to encourage research, theory, and classroom practices involving expanded concepts of language. It contributes to a sense of community in which scholars and educators from pre-school through the university exchange points of view and cutting-edge approaches to teaching and learning. *JAEPL* is especially interested in helping those teachers who experiment with new strategies for learning to share their practices and confirm their validity through publication in professional journals.

Topics of interest include but are not limited to: intuition, inspiration, insight, imagery, meditation, silence, archetypes, emotion, attitudes, values, spirituality, motivation, body wisdom and felt sense, and healing. Articles may be practical, research-oriented, theoretical, bibliographic, professional, and/or exploratory/personal. Each issue has a theme. The theme of the 1996–1997 issue is Writing, Thinking, and Teaching in the Borderland.

Membership in the AEPL is \$12. Contact Nat Teich, Department of English, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, 97403–1286 for membership information. Membership includes that year's issue of the *JAEPL*.

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The Editor's Message

The prospect of bringing off a new journal is character building, I have come to believe—particularly when it is published only once a year and by a fledging organization. The *Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (JAEPL)* had to be good, very good, especially the inaugural issue. That this was the first issue also meant, I hoped, that readers would tolerate mistakes. Surely, mistakes could be corrected with the next issue. But on second thought, that was a long year away.

Nonetheless, I celebrate the occasion of the inaugural issue of *JAEPL*. The logo is derived from the Egyptian hieroglyph, akhet. The sign represents the horizon from which the sun emerges and behind which the sun disappears daily. The logo depicts mountain peaks with the sun appearing between them on the horizon. The design was chosen because the image graphically embodies both the quieting and broadening vision of language that this journal indeed speaks to.

The theme of this first issue is Contemporary Composition Studies: Steps Beyond. What it does *not* mean is abandoning the solid armature of knowledge and skills. What it *does* mean is that we reflect our history but we question it. We resist its safety. Let me rephrase that. It means that we hold tradition up for scrutiny at the same time that we push boundaries back, follow intuitions, test and record them. What this also means is that *JAEPL* is different from other publications in the field. Unlike establishment journals, an occasional expressive essay, for example, will not merely seep into *JAEPL*, valorized by a special few who, only after playing by the rules, are allowed to break them. The forms of the articles, as readers will see, are not only empirical, theoretical, and practical, but also exploratory/personal and imaginative. This journal is for all thinking-feeling instructors who learn and teach, so to speak, to the beat of a different drummer.

JAEPL serves as an alternative forum for teachers and writers with establishment professional affiliations but whose professional beliefs may straddle several perspectives. For this issue articles are contributed by professionals using unorthodox methods in mainstream language teaching—play, drama, kinesthetics. Readers will also hear the voice of educators working in related fields or those who feel marginalized because they serve marginal populations: the disabled, the neurologically impaired, the underrepresented; and do so in alternative locations (By this, I mean not only physical settings but also bodily locations.). Individuals who do not know which professional forum to trust will find the door open here. But if I were asked to characterize the authors of those articles, more than anything else, I would say that they believe in things they cannot see.

A few statistics about the inaugural issue of *JAEPL*: Inquiries about submitting articles numbered 33. Actual submissions numbered 29. Of the contributions received, readers requested only minor revision on three manuscripts. Five manuscripts were returned with recommendations for major revision. Eight manuscripts were rejected, five by both readers and three by me

because their subjects and the journal were clearly a mismatch. Seven came back with recommendations that were split between major and minor revision. And six submissions were returned with a split between major revision and rejection. Twelve pieces are published in this issue, producing an acceptance rate of 41%. The inconsistencies in ratings were not surprising, given our amoebic-like subspeciality. Pairing manuscripts and readers was not easy. A few manuscripts were returned when reviewers said they recognized the author. Resending those submissions added three to four weeks to the review process. Readers willing to speak with potential contributors also lengthened reviewing time but usually made for stronger pieces.

With personal experience submitting and publishing scholarly articles, I devised the *JAEPL* manuscript review to work like this: A manuscript arrives and is logged in. Two readers are identified and the submission is sent out with Reader's Guidelines and a Reader's Form. Reviewers have about three weeks to read the manuscript and return their comments and the manuscript. If they feel unqualified to evaluate a particular submission or believe anonymity has somehow been compromised, they return the article unreviewed.

Just as authors, readers need to be accountable for their comments. I ask reviewers to sign their name at the bottom of the Reader's Form and to indicate if it may be made known to the author. When permission is granted, the ensuing dialogue, written or oral, often turns into an opportunity for substantial clarification. As does collaborative learning, the peer review process has obvious virtues. Potential contributors reported that they were generally enriched by pre-publication conversations.

After reviewers' comments are returned, I read the articles carefully, leaning heavily on reviewers' judgments. I send reviewers' comments to the author with a letter of my own and any emendations written on the manuscript. When major revisions are requested, I often send the revised manuscript to the original readers, though in the end, it is I who makes the final decision. The procedure generally takes between two and three months.

The first time readers are sent contributions, I send along guidelines, asking readers to:

1. Observe some version of the golden rule. Respond as if you were writing to a friend whom you want to keep as a friend. Use a natural and respectful tone.
2. Feel free to point out significant, related publications that the author may have overlooked.
3. In a rejection give earnest, concrete, supportive advice. It might even be helpful to suggest another outlet for the piece.
4. If an otherwise acceptable article exceeds the page limit, mark parts for deletion. However, emphasize what should be saved in a manuscript, not only what should be changed or edited out.

When a contribution has been accepted, I start copy editing. If I don't

already have the submission on disk, I ask for one plus a short abstract and biography. At this point I usually call the contributor to set up a time when we can go over the piece. I try to do the line editing by phone, even though it may take an hour or two. After considerable experience with this method, I find it exquisitely effective. We all know how illuminating it is to get our words into our muscles, into our vocal chords, as we try to be clear for someone who is truly trying to understand. It is the dialogue of negotiating meaning, jockeying for clarity and understanding.

Most reader responses were gentle and specific, generous and sympathetic. A few reviews produced several cursory comments but only one yielded a harsh, off-putting reaction. Unlike in the review processes of establishment journals, I did not come across any bad mouthing because a contribution infringed on a reader's own research program. On the contrary, reviewers seemed only too happy to see work out there, getting read, getting published.

There was no right kind of essay. Essays were downgraded or rejected if they were conceptually shallow or chaotic, or inaccurate and out-dated. Readers in general wanted nothing heavy or pretentious. They resented jargon. Corn-ball sentimentality, syrupy or purple prose also jarred them. Readers took a dim view of stylistic awkwardness or redundancy, or an egregious number of typos and spelling errors.

Accepted were generally pieces that added something substantial to our body of knowledge or provided insight into the complexity of that knowledge. Or the contribution posed a new issue, bringing it to bear on some question in language teaching or learning. As other editors have stated, contributions should be enlightened and fresh. Authors should have a sense of what is happening in the disciplinary debate. They should try to engage practicing professionals at the same time that they say something important to them. Critical rigor, imaginative speculation, and a graceful, felicitous writing style also worked in authors' favor.

Why did I choose APA style over MLA? An interesting question. The virtues of the MLA style are that it is most familiar to the greatest number of contributors and readers. It calls for a Works Cited list that conforms to standard punctuation and capitalization conventions. For example, full first names in a Works Cited list means more information, so that citations for, say, writing specialists Charles Cooper and Marilyn Cooper could not possibly be confused.

In contrast, APA style requires a number of curious conventions. In the References full first names are replaced by initials, which I find unnecessarily telegraphic. Unlike the third edition of the *APA Publication Manual*, the first line of each entry in the references is now indented while the lines following are flush left. Because the entry names are now buried on the page, I find locating citations visually more difficult. For books, only proper nouns and first words of titles and subtitles are capitalized; the rest are lower case. But not titles of journals. They are virtually the only document capitalized as in MLA style—the logic of which escapes me. Titles of essays, book chapters, and articles in periodicals are capitalized like book titles. But unlike MLA style, quotations marks are virtually extinct on APA's Reference list.

However, the big ticket item for me was the in-text documentation. I like to

know when things were done, said, written, or published. What stuck most in my craw was the fact that the MLA style does not require dates in intratextual citations. So unless authors insert dates into their text, readers may be left without chronological grounding. MLA adds abbreviated titles to authors' names for intratextual citations to distinguish among several works by the same author—which to my mind are irredeemably intrusive. This is precisely where APA style carries the day. Although I think readers could do without the abbreviations, p. or pp. that precede page numbers, APA style calls for the publication year as part of every intratextual citation.

For this volume I drew reviewers from within the ranks of AEPL because I did not know enough about the professional pursuits or publishing record of our larger special interest constituency. We continue to need book reviewers and manuscript readers. Among the ways to participate in the *JAEPL* process are to attend AEPL sessions at the annual meetings of the CCC or the NCTE, participate in the AEPL summer retreats, write and publish, and become a self-studied specialist on some aspect of the domain beyond the cognitive. Drop a letter to me or to Assistant to the Editor Mary Deming. Identify your areas of interest and describe what professional experiences (presentations, publications, workshops) you have had in these areas. Feel free to recommend individuals whose interests intersect with ours but who may not be affiliated with the Assembly.

And of course, same time, next year. The theme of our next issue is *Writing, Teaching, and Thinking in the Borderland*. By this I mean stories of personal and professional discovery or renewal, administrative or community cooperation, and theoretical epiphanies, so that advances in language education are being realized in enabling and constructive ways.

We have already made some adjustments for the next volume. We have increased the maximum number of pages to fifteen. We will start a Letters to the Editor section provided we receive some. Although I read all material, determine the reviewers and its ultimate publishability, submissions are now sent first to Mary Deming for logging in and manuscript management.

Submissions continue to come in. If they were too late for this inaugural issue, I am holding them for consideration for the next issue. Potential contributors should refer to page 110 for submission guidelines. The deadline is February 29, 1996.

I hope with this journal that we are keeping some old friends and making some new. Of the old friends, let me thank the SUNY at Brockport Educational Opportunity Center for being my weigh station during my sabbatical year. Both Georgia State University and the English department at SUNY at Brockport helped with every form of communication available to them: e-mail, fax, postal service, phone, and duplicating. What else is there? Gracious thanks to the Lifebridge Foundation for funds for this inaugural issue of *JAEPL*. I also thank Martha Goff Stoner, Mary Deming, and her staff member, graduate student David Olliff.

JAEPL promotes self-definition, emotional wisdom, and an openness to experience. Please consider this Editor's Message your invitation to join AEPL, to write, to listen, to understand. ☺

Alice G. Brand
SUNY at Brockport

Writing Reality: Constructivism, Metaphor, and Cosmology

Mary C. Daane

When language instructors teach from the conviction that “words form the floor, walls, and ceiling of our existence” (Nouwen, 1981, p. 31), from a recognition that language is both the foundation and reflection of students’ reality, value systems, experiences, and ways of being in the world, instructors receive and evaluate their students’ discourse as far more significant than accumulations of discrete achievement skills. This constructivist (Ortony 1979) or experientialist (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) perspective sensitizes teachers to a holistic view of their students’ linguistic lives; often constructivist teachers assign activities that encourage students to use “expressive” language, language that is “close to the self” and gives signals about [students] as well as signals about [students’] topic[s]” (Britton, 1982, pp. 96-97). By doing this, the “constructivist” teacher becomes privy to the recurrent themes and metaphors by which students render their identities.

In recent years epistemic theory in many disciplines has drifted from taxonomy to “linguisticity” (Foucault, 1973), resulting in a burgeoning of publications on metaphor. Surprisingly, though, the trend has given rise to very little discussion about the significance of metaphor in writing theory. In fact, Seitz’s “Composition’s Misunderstanding of Metaphor” (1991) notes a paradox in the field’s persistence in viewing metaphor as something to be isolated, controlled, even expunged from student writing and discussions about writing, for the sake of clarity. As Booth (1978) reminds us, “The quality of any culture is in large part the quality of the metaphorists that it creates and sustains” (p. 72).

Metaphors help thinkers and writers forge new connections, relevancies, realities and, at the same time, control the way they view the world. For this reason the discussion of metaphor should no longer be closeted in the literature class; a theoretical understanding of language, metaphor, and the reality they embrace is as essential to contemporary composition pedagogy as it is has always been to poetry and metaphysics. Those who take language seriously and acknowledge its power to change lives and, consequently, the world, recognize that composition classes must be more than laboratories to dissect syntax and paragraph patterns; composition classes must become studios where students’ inchoate potentials can be transformed by the magic of metaphor from the unspeakable within to an articulate without.

Basic Philosophies of Language

Since the time of Aristotle and throughout the history of Western thought,

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“objectivism” (Johnson, 1987) has dominated philosophical approaches to language. Briefly, the objectivist understanding holds that language relates in a one-to-one, precise manner to a reality that is disembodied or separate and outside of human thought, i.e., words have exact meanings that fit the properties of the world we live in. Collaterally, the objectivists consider knowledge fixed and accessible; for them, “the cat sat on the mat” means one and only one thing to all competent speakers of English. Objectivity is possible and necessary for reason; absolute and knowable *truth* exists and may be derived by impersonal and rational analysis. Moreover, the vocabularies of philosophy and science are accurate, and the formulations of these disciplines can correctly describe and predict the universe.

In the twentieth century an alternate understanding of language evolved from the work of such philosophers as Kant (1781/1965), Ricoeur (1976), Vygotsky (1962), and Whorf (1956). This new approach is aphorized in Wittgenstein’s (1953) often cited statement, “The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” This new point of view led to the now widely-held conviction that the language we generate both creates and communicates a constructed reality, shaping our value systems and our ways of being in the world. Indeed, accepting the breach between the world and the word accounts for the postmodern view of an indeterminate reality.

Those who hold this view of reality argue that *truth* is a product of our culturally determined thought system and our particular experiences within that culture, not of some absolute or neutral set of pan-human concepts. Rorty’s (1990) comment, “Truth is simply a compliment paid to sentences seen to be paying their way” (as cited in Klepp, 1990, p. 118), makes this very point. For constructivists, objectivity is not nullified but understood to remain possible within the framework of cultural supports and limitations. From this stance, rationality appears to rest on both logic and imagination. Therefore, a set of informational propositions may yield many validly reasoned conclusions that will vary individually depending on the experiences, imagination, and available linguistic resources. Accordingly, any individual’s understanding of “the cat sat on the mat” is shaped by earlier personal encounters with, and cultural perspectives on, both cats and mats. Philosophers who acknowledge the human propensity for “seeing-as” (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 193) are known as constructivists or experientialists. They view language and imagination as endowments that liberate us from the constraints of absolute meaning and thereby elevate linguistic expression beyond the skill category to a “phenomenon of freedom” (Steiner, 1989, p. 151).

Constructivism and Metaphor

In order to derive a correspondence between metaphor and cosmology, I settle on one point of view as to how metaphors operate or what they do. There are generally three positions on this issue.

First, the substitution view considers metaphors “fuzzy and vague, inessential frills, appropriate for the purposes of the politician and of the poet, but not for those of the scientist, who is attempting to furnish an objective description of

physical reality” (Ortony, 1979, p. 2). This objectivist approach holds that “metaphors are essentially linguistic ornaments for which their more prosaic equivalents can be readily substituted” (Ortony, 1985, p. 153). In that view, Yeats’ (1927/1962) lines from “Sailing to Byzantium”: “An aged man is but a paltry thing,/ A tattered coat upon a stick...,” are simply an unnecessary embellishment having the semantic equivalent of the literal, drab, but more precise, “An old man is insignificant, frayed, brittle and frail” (p. 95).

A second position on metaphor, the comparative view, has its roots in Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotle in “On Poetics” defines metaphor as “the intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.” This belief that metaphor allows language users to propose otherwise similarities differs little from the substitution view, for the comparison view finds “every metaphor to be a condensed or elliptic simile” (Richards, 1936, pp. 35–36). Thus, the comparison view, just another spin on the substitution view, would find Yeats’ line an expendable, implied simile approximating, “An old man looks like a tattered coat hanging on a stick.”

A third view of metaphor, one that is consistent with the constructivist view, holds that the terms of a metaphor interact to set off a chain of associations that give rise to an altogether new meaning, one that conjures far more than the meaning constituted by the original terms. This view, arising from Richards’ discussion of the “interanimation of words” (as cited in Black, 1979), holds that new meaning arises, not from the words themselves, but from a new or startling juxtaposition of words. The interactionist position on Yeats’ line would hold that readers bring their own associations, thoughts, feelings, reminiscences about old men, tattered coats, and sticks; thus, individuals’ interpretations of the line will vary. The interactionist view is consistent with contemporary reader response theory in describing meaning, not as captured ideas unalterably preserved by the page, but as variable incantations at the juncture of the word, the reader, the culture, and the moment.

In the constructivist universe, both the substitution and the comparison views are inadequate, for if all language is seen as a reflection of the user’s view of reality, and if an objective reality is understood to be a myth, then all language is seen to be *more* or *less* removed from the objects and phenomena to which it refers. If nothing in the lexicon conforms directly and absolutely to reality, then everything in the lexicon is a metaphor for that reality. Thus the difference between literal and figurative language is *quantitative* rather than *qualitative*. The issue is not whether or not an expression is metaphorical but whether it is metaphorical enough for the average, competent language user to recognize its metaphoricity. Black (1979) and others have differentiated between “live” and “dead” metaphors. A live metaphor is one that is syntactically jarring enough to catch the attention of a reader or listener. On the other hand, dead metaphors are those that have become so automatic that average users barely note their metaphoricity; head of the family, arm of the chair, and foot of the bed are everyday metaphorical expressions we rarely note as such.

Metaphor and Reality

Several commentators have taken exception to the objectivist position that finds metaphors “unimportant, deviant, and parasitic on ‘normal usage’” (Ortony,

1979, p. 2). Levin (1979) maintains that when we respond to metaphorical constructions, we do not construe “the utterance so that it makes sense of the world, we construe the world so as to make sense of the utterance” (p. 131). Encountering a metaphor, we complete a quick mental check of the meanings of the terms and conjure an imaginary reality to make that anomalous expression sensible. Thus, the notion that metaphors are aberrant expressions is superseded by the idea that the language is impeccable; just the facts are deranged. Metaphors are to be taken literally; “They mean what they say—what gives us the world” (p. 131).

For those who see truth as a matter of “fitting words to the world” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 196), concession to a new reality can imply falsehood and lies. Empson (1951) noted that the truth or falsity of literary works is not the issue; when contracting with a text, readers are expected to rearrange the world to match the writer’s creation.

A prototype of the notion that metaphor creates truth was reified in the works of literary Romantics. Coleridge’s “willing suspension of disbelief” (as cited in Salinger, 1966, p. 89), the condition necessary for the reader’s transaction with the text, and Keats’ (1817/1967) “negative capability” (p. 399), the tolerance for the ambiguity of paradox, and Shelley’s (1840/1967) “Defense of Poetry,” which argues that poetry “creates anew the universe” (p. 483) are all concepts that foreshadowed the constructivist position on language.

Identifying poets as seers and visionaries popular to Western stereotypes attests to an understanding that the metaphors of poetry do not stand as merely juxtaposed to logical descriptions of reality, but actually create a transcendent reality for reader consideration. In other words, the truth of language is located in its removal from the world—its otherworldliness. The concept of objective reality makes a faulty backdrop for interpreting linguistic constructions. One contemporary humorist concisely settled the conflict between the objectivist and constructivist points of view: “In cases of major discrepancy [between literature and life] it’s always reality that’s got it wrong....Reality is frequently inaccurate” (Adams, 1980, p. 38).

Just as any consideration of metaphor on a scale polarized between truth and falsity is untenable, so is any attempt to fix discriminations between the literal and the metaphorical. In the constructivist or experientialist view, literal and metaphorical expressions are not separate species but variants of a single breed—human language. We cannot claim that metaphors are present in some texts and absent from others. All texts are rife with metaphors, a few arresting, most veiled in everyday use. This blurring of the literal/metaphorical distinction reflects the postmodern mischief which aims to deconstruct and level many of the pet valuations in Western philosophy’s collection of hierarchical opposites, including true/false, real/fictional, objective/subjective, and literal/metaphorical.

A Constructivist Cosmology

In the objectivist system, metaphor is considered the sole province of the literary mind that is interested in the subtleties and amenities of language. It is not. It is at the very core of our learning, thinking, and writing. Noting the

omnipresence of metaphor, Seitz (1991) reminds the field of the futility of its recommendations that figurative expressions be replaced with literal explanations; “we cannot catch up to the speed of figuration nor somehow hold it still with literal language” (p. 290). We have also seen that the literal can be called metaphorical, that metaphor can be taken literally, that through language humans create their own reality. To complete the circle, we can even claim, with Galeano (1989/1991), that “[p]erhaps we are the words that tell us who we are” (p. 18)—that it is the language that has created the human.

Biologists assert that language defines humans and separates them from the animal kingdom; words elevate us “above the silence of plants and the grunts of beasts” (Bartel, 1983, p.75). Dennett (1991) refutes Wittgenstein’s comment: “If a lion could talk, we could not understand him” by claiming “[If] a lion could talk that lion would have a mind so different from the general run of lion minds, that although we could understand him just fine, we would learn little about ordinary lions from him” (as cited in Johnson, 1991, p. 60). To paraphrase Primo Levi (1989), the “whine of an animal” is not a text (p. 172). While animals may signal with their whimpers and whinnies, their noises are neither paraphrastic nor inventive.

The equation of language with creation is nearly as old as Western culture itself. The first chapter, third verse, of Genesis tells of a God who speaks creation (And God said, Let there be light: and there was light) and names our existential opposites, night and day, heaven and earth. The opening chapter of the Gospel of John, first verse, repeats this theme; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The last verse of “The Revelation of John” lists those who will be excluded from messianic Jerusalem: “dogs, fortune tellers, and the sexually immoral, murderers, idolaters, and everyone of false speech and false life,” reflecting both a pre- and post-modern stance on the power of language to define reality. The kingdom of God is gained by utterance, not grace.

The great prophets and mystics have always known this, and that is why the great religious texts are built on allegory, parable, proverb, and magical imagery. Jesus, Lao-Tzu, Muhammad, Siddhartha, the Zen Masters, and the Hasidic Zaddiks all worked from a tacit understanding that humans recoil from the bald truth, that seekers are more likely to accept new theological premises when they are presented indirectly. Often the new religious values are disguised in stories involving commonplace situations, such as allegories and parables, or paradoxical puzzlers like those found in the Old Testament book of “Proverbs,” the Tao Te Ching, and Zen koans.

Ben Shahn’s (1954) telling of the “The Alphabet of Creation,” a legend from the *Zohar*, the Kabbalah’s primary mystical text, derived from ancient Gnostic tales begins:

Twenty-six generations before the creation of the world, the twenty-two letters of the alphabet descended from the crown of God whereon they were engraved with a pen of flaming fire. They gathered around about God and one after another spoke and entreated, each one, that the world be created through him. (pp. 1–2)

According to the legend, the Lord chose to fashion the heavens and earth with the masculine Beth and the feminine Aleph. Aleph's selection was a reward for her modesty (a conceit that has had for millennia a profound effect on human expectations about women).

In a recent article on quantum cosmology, Primack and Abrams (1995) remind us of another account of creation involving language found in Jewish midrashic literature. "*Genesis Rabbah* 1:1 says: 'The Holy one in creating the universe,...worked from a plan—the Torah'" (p. 71). Moreover, the notion that language can form the universe is not peculiar to the traditions of Judaeo-Christian creationism. The Buddhist monks' chant, "Aouhm," vocalizes from back to front of the mouth, a gloss of all the speaking positions. The gloss itself functions as an auditory metonymy, a symbolic reiteration of the act of creation. If, mythologically speaking, language created the universe, and if we, as members of the universe, have been given power over language, then we, too, have been endowed with the power of creation. "The exercise of human language enacts, albeit on a microscopically humble scale, the divine reflexes of creation, the Logos or 'speaking into being' of the universe" (Steiner, 1971, p. 75). "One word can cripple a human relationship, can do dirt on hope" (Steiner, 1989, p. 58).

Language and metaphor are our human trust; through them we spell our vision of the now and the forever. As humans, our nature is to use them constructively. As teachers, it is our responsibility to empower our students to use their linguistic and metaphorical birthrights to construct and re-construct their intellectual, political, and even their spiritual lives; for by their own metaphors will they be known and will they know. We must teach with the conviction of Vaclav Havel: "Transcendence is the only real alternative to extinction" (as cited in Primack & Abrams, 1995, p. 73). If we fail in this obligation, we risk reverting to the abyss of unspeakability. ☹

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Earthworm Hermeneutics

Derek Owens

The Omnipresence of Boundaries

The markers are everywhere. Riding through Queens at 7 a.m. on the Q31 bus, I begin to tally the obvious barriers: Metal doors barricading unopened shops; graffiti on walls, sidewalks, stoops—hundreds of tags on a single block, city as strata of palimpsests; concertina wire strung around apartment balconies; iron gates built across a street leading to a school; parking garage stairwells dead-ending in plywood; bars on windows. And from where I sit on the bus, invisible lines of separation surround every face. In the standing-room-only crowd I search to find cracks between bodies where my line of sight might leak out a window.

I get off at the University for my 8 a.m. class, note the iron fence enclosing the campus; the security booths; combination locks in the doors of the buildings; my office cubicle where the walls don't quite reach the ceiling, blurring public and private space; the raised platform in my classroom where instructors are expected to stand behind a podium twelve inches taller than students.

At the end of the day, waiting at the Jamaica train station I see concessions where porn magazines are sold by men bunkered behind their counters; sitting on the train, I keep my elbow from touching the woman's next to me, my eyes from hers; on the ride home through Nassau and Suffolk counties I realize that I can't look out the window for more than 30 seconds without seeing chainlink fence, the one ingredient "nice" neighborhoods, industrial parks, and vacant lots all have in common.

At 7 p.m. I walk home through empty suburbia. It is dark, and I trigger motion detectors above garage doors, spotlights clicking on as I come within range. When I walk into my own yard I am, as always, momentarily conscious of my feet making contact with the ground. This is our new house, and the first thing my wife and I want to do is surround it with an attractive fence.

Boundaries as Psychosocial Inevitabilities

The boundaries stratifying our communal and psychic landscapes are more than omnipresent. They are nothing less than prostheses, psychotopological extensions shooting out from mental into physical space. Not only are we cyborgs, as theorist Donna Haraway (1989) taught us, but we are the very lines of territorialization and demarcation that we navigate every waking hour. Boundaries are social constructs, as integral to our construction of the world as language. In fact, while it has been said that language is a system of boundaries, it might be more apt to say that we are systems of boundaries painted with

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something called language.

Consequently, talk of dismantling boundaries and eliminating once and for all the lines of attraction and repulsion that are our physical signatures, of moving beyond boundaries into some pure, perimeter-less space is at best a fantasy, at worst fascism (conscious or otherwise). It is human to construct boundaries on top of boundaries, to create boxes of influence and resistance. Hedgerows, avenues, voting districts, grids, lines of latitude, every utterance and signifier—the blanket hung over the rope between the beds in Clark Gable's and Claudette Colbert's motel, those two reluctant lovers in *It Happened One Night*. They're all signs of our need to preserve and redefine the spaces that are ever extensions of our bodies. While the forms our markers take are infinite, at a base level we are all dogs constantly marking our territories and just as obsessive in our constant need to seek out scents made by others.

Of course, no boundary is ipso facto permanent. The walls of Jericho can and do come down, as Gable says in the movie—and are of course always in states of potential flux. But if boundaries crumble they leave in their stead not vacuums but newer walls, mutations, and hybrids. Even Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) idea of the body without organs is not to be confused with the fantasy of the transcendentalist's transparent eyeball passing through the environs, but "is a limit" (p. 150) and thus a horizon point toward which our tribes of selves continually slide and yearn. We are all border writers, to use D. Emily Hicks' term (1991), and it must be within the ability of every one of us to "present the world with a new multidimensional holographic ordering of desire" (p. 123). Because constructing boundaries is so inherently human (Perelman, 1993, p.233), we need to imagine newer, richer ways of articulating whatever boundaries we seek to build with and over the old. But before we introduce some routes toward this end, it is necessary to expose what's wrong with binary thinking that wants either to preserve final boundaries or transgress (through inclusion) "all" of them.

Binary Assumptions in Centrist and Pluralist Thinking

The problem with boundaries is not that they exist but how people pervert them. The most obvious abuse comes in the form of those who define themselves as the Center and need to maintain that image of power and self-promotion through systematic oppression of all who do not meet their image of Being. First world countries, militaries, corporations, elitists, men who destroy women, adults who destroy children, all read boundary as weapon. Those who do not exist in the Center do not exist. They are threats and as such must be erased or converted. For the Centrists there is only one border, the edge of the world. The battle to maintain a State of purity, an anaesthetized zone of sameness is waged against pagans threatening to rise from the abyss. This (patho)logic of the Center has been expressed countless times but perhaps nowhere more thoroughly than in the work of Argentinean philosopher Dussel (1985).

Equally sinister but slightly less obvious than the Us versus Them rhetoric of the Centrists is the supposedly "multicultural" agenda of romantics who claim to promote difference but in reality are engaged in a project where differentiation is imposed on others in order to preserve another centrism, this time

calling itself Pluralism. To distinguish humans by cataloging them under differentia (such as race, class, sexuality) too often amounts to assigning the “Other” a title through which it can be made recognizable: The once exotic, like a butterfly, is now safely pinned in its appropriate box. The unknown is now “ours” and thus no longer a threat. Soundings from the periphery are “brought in” by the Pluralist, made canonical and palatable, in a word, legal (whereas “the inevitable position of liberation [is] subversive illegality,” [Dussel, 1985, p. 66]). Any originality, any true difference is now subsumed by the (always fictitious) rubric under which it has been assigned. Difference “in the name of” multiculturalism is racism—often unintentional, but racism nonetheless. It reflects a desire to classify and regulate humans and their works under a desensitizing, awe-inhibiting grid of familiar, dead terms (Black lesbian writer; young Asian-American artist). To fetishize difference this way is to cultivate a different kind of sameness. This is why multicultural anthologies are sanitized, nonthreatening, and interchangeable. “Difference” here is not so much that which is genuinely new—and thus not just a threat to existing canons but the notion of canonicity itself—but that which will best “fit” within the pluralistic project. Its marketability determines its value. Even Giroux (1992), who rightfully articulates the violence of binary oppositions, does so in a discourse predicated on an assumed dualism where “radical” theory exists to right the wrongs of conservative and leftist ideology (pp. 23-28). Many of the sentiments embedded in so-called radical educational theory are laudable, but we still have to admit that all parties involved in the debate are related in some embarrassing but undeniable ways. Fundamentalist conservatives, Afrocentrist theorists, and postmodern feminists alike all collect paychecks from institutions with questionable if not reprehensible politics. We (I do not leave myself out of the equation) own property, want more money, consume more than we need, and think constantly of our careers. And we all waste dangerously limited natural resources in our race to publish. Seen from this angle, we are all on the same side of a fence that few are willing to acknowledge.

“The smell of totalitarianism is in the air,” wrote Giroux (1989, p. 218), and we are all gagging from the stench as hateful dimwits infest an already infected federal legislature. But there is a problem when we become too caught up in our own us-versus-them rhetoric; even the best of us have the little voice of the fascist lurking somewhere deep (and too often not deep enough) within our psyches. “Perhaps now it is only the impure which might claim any kind of authenticity,” writes one of the editors of *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (Ferguson, 1990, p. 12). But *none* of us is pure. None exempt. Which renders the very notion of a viable “out there” dangerously suspect (particularly an “out there” desperate to “claim” authenticity. For if one is indeed the real thing, why beg the question?)

Both the centrist and the pluralist rely on boundary markers of exclusion; the latter simply permits more variety in its territory than the former. But of course, even for the pluralist there are still voices and activities “way out there” which will never appear in any made-for-profit anthology or surface in any politically correct pedagogy of multiculturalism. Such works can only be declared obscene, pornographic, unsuitable even for the most permissive of canons. And, of course, that which is truly different—that which is unclassifiable, terrifying in its strange

and alien beauty—is precisely pornography but not in the sense of the body hatred found on newsstands, but as magic, gnosis (Bey, 1991).

Earthworm Hermeneutics

To address “the boundary question” I am trying to flesh out a stance from which we might begin to rejoin our selves and our environments; in the process we move ever away from the homogenized emptiness that characterizes any center in order to locate the truly different and dangerously authentic. To peel away the inevitable film of cynicism that coats all of us living in the late twentieth century and reach the potential for amazement and fascination I believe still lies dormant within anyone not totally anaesthetized by television or theory. To translate the self *to itself* on its own terms, unmediated by the State. My thinking—which to be sure on this matter is still in the infancy stage—draws from Enrique Dussel’s philosophy of liberation through exteriority and antifetishism, the writings of Hakim Bey, and the ecopolitics of Paul Ryan. I have chosen the worm motif for the moment not just because of catchy alliteration (although the sounds of the terms are now at least as important as what they contain) but because it helps us focus on a three-pronged pedagogical initiative embedded within a hermeneutics concerned not with textual exegesis or reinterpretation of the social, but with poesis. That is, the project of writing the world, again and again, from scratch, each time.

First, earthworm hermeneutics finds value only at the periphery, the wildness “outside” the outside that has been tamed, appropriated, turned outside in. I believe with Dussel that liberation can be found only in the periphery, for to be of the center (which is to be the center) is to consume ourselves in the name of stasis. Exteriority brings consciousness as much as centrality induces stupor, and it is the investigation and cultivation of each person’s private exteriority that is the rightful business of education.

Soil surrounding a healthy earthworm population is usually fertile. It promotes greater diversity of flora and fauna. Poor soil, which likely indicates a thin earthworm population, invites aggressive and invasive weeds that spread quickly, monopolizing the system inefficiently and unproductively. A few aggressive, “opportunistic species” (Hawken, 1993) take over, discouraging variation. Centrist theories are built on sour soil; what makes them thrive will ultimately destroy them because the ecological balance they promote is severely restricted. Romantic pluralistic theories, on the other hand, want rich soil but limit what will grow there. The carefully shaped Victorian garden may be more aesthetically pleasing than a sea of weeds, but it is every inch an indicator of someone’s need to control and restrict. Where the centrist impulse risks inbreeding in longing for supreme homogeneity, the pluralistic stance encourages contradiction: it claims to want the conditions for variety, but simultaneously limits that variety.

Earthworms respect boundaries not by usurping them but by providing the conditions that support such surface variety. Earthworms tunnel beneath boundaries while not appropriating them. Boundaries rise and fall on the surface, and the earthworm assists that random rise and fall without seeking to contain or restrict the variation on the surface.

The educator may be seen as a chaos gardener. Not conventional gardeners limited by the tiny range of seeds reserved for them in stores, but those who help create an environment receptive to all variety. Educators reject neither the canonical nor the extreme but wish to surround themselves with human and natural works *so long as they induce fascination and amazement*. Such educators seek to share, to return to others that sense of mystery, primarily because this enhances the sense of awe. I bring particular material into my class not because it is “great” and “ought” to be taught, but because I find that to be amazed also involves a need to share that amazement. In essence, we become that mystery by entering into it, perpetuating it.

What this means in my own writing classes is that I try to introduce materials that my students will not find on television or in most American bookstores. In fact, unless it is unavoidable, I do whatever I can to ensure that discussions directly or indirectly related to television, advertising, and the unimaginative business of the world do not enter the classroom. To spend an hour critiquing the Cult of Sameness (examining misogyny in a cigarette ad, “deconstructing” Beverly Hills 90210) is to have one hour of one’s life owned by advertising executives. Dismissal of television is still promotion of the beast, since the medium continues to control the conversation.

It also means that I try not to entertain all the old stunted pseudo-debates: death penalty, abortion, euthanasia, legalization of drugs, etc. “In every single ‘issue’ cooked up for ‘debate’ in the patternbook of the Spectacle, *both sides* are invariably full of shit” (Bey, 1991, p. 50). And just as the fiction of binary debates distracts us with their seductive “arguments,” so too has the fashionable tug-of-war embodied in the Centrist-Pluralist politics become the essence of academia. As a way to resist the limitations of this split, I ferret out works located “off to the side” by visionary, intuitive, and utopian thinkers. As a result, I have students investigate communitarian sects, early American “dropout” cultures, underground “zines,” “art brut,” and “outsider art,” visionary treatises on business and economics, and so forth. Obviously shaped by my own needs and interests, the material I teach focuses on those who have thought to rebuild the world through controversial and restorative thinking. In writing about these themes, students are also encouraged to compose in exploratory forms (Owens, 1994).

Whereas the first initiative behind earthworm hermeneutics is the privileging of extreme variation of ideas, the second condition is more pragmatic. It is a mistake to encourage modes of construction (thinking, writing, performance) still dangerous in the eyes of the academic community—if students remain at risk. Students, of course, need to learn academic discourse not so they can become better puppets but because they need camouflage. Developmental writers attract attention; mistakes in grammar trigger raised eyebrows. Such outside attention restricts private intellectual activity. To have the freedom to pursue our intellectual goals, we need a certain amount of time alone. Consequently, a considerable portion of any writing course these days must be aimed at helping students pass—that is, pass for academics-in-the-making. Those who can, at least grammatically and verbally, know how to fit in, have greater opportunity to disappear, and follow their own pursuits.

Earthworms are “nightcrawlers.” They move under cover of darkness, know how to get things done. They work behind, beneath, and under the boundaries without drawing attention to themselves. To engage in Dussel’s idea of illegal philosophy means knowing how, when necessary, to travel incognito. Just as being alive means navigating through and constructing numerous boundaries, so too it means knowing how (and when) to wear masks.

Finally, there is a moral function to earthworm hermeneutics. To privilege variation just because it’s funky and exhilarating could be enough, but not today. Today we are in a fix unlike any we have ever known. A friend of mine says that the first required reading for every course in every discipline should be the most recent *State of the World* (1993) distributed by the Worldwatch Institute. We live in a time when, at current rates of population growth and ecological devastation, the earth will become irreversibly damaged within our lifetimes. Few of us even know how to begin to conceptualize this fact, let alone address it. But it is the responsibility of educators to make nothing less than new pedagogies in response to this news of the world. To promote variation is to foreground that which is truly strange. At this point in history the thing strangest to all of us is something called the earth. Although postmodernists like Hicks separate the world into the territorialized and the deterritorialized, all of us can now be said to inhabit the latter. Women, gays, people of color, and just about everyone who looks, walks, and talks differently from me are simply the more obvious “borders” subletting or squatting in power zones constructed and commandeered by other, usually invisible figures (white-male-heterosexual-capitalist—you know the litany). But we’re all border riders, straddling not one but an array of unstable, impermanent fences. Those who would claim centrality, who truly believe that to occupy territorialized havens, to be the hubs and the nuclei of society, are simply more far gone than the rest. These people have the *wetiko* psychosis analyzed in Forbes’ *Columbus and Other Cannibals* (1992) in which carriers “consume another’s life for their own private purpose or profit” (p. 34). But while such individuals (or more appropriately institutions) do indeed wield violent power, the figures we associate with such centers of hate have turned from humans into witches (I use the term in the traditional Native American sense), and besides, it is too late for blame; my discussion here is aimed at the remaining humans.

In order to combat the cynicism that permeates our present historical moment, we need an inventiveness borne of urgency and visionary ideals. One such example is Paul Ryan’s *Video Mind, Earth Mind* (1993) which documents his attempts over several decades to articulate strategies for an ecology of mind. Ryan begins his book, like the *State of the World*, by reminding us that in under four decades “we pass a threshold of irreversible environmental destruction. The door to a healthy life on earth dead bolts behind us. We watch our grandchildren garbage-pick their way through life in ecosystems that are terminally ill” (p. 1). Seen from this angle, we are all deterritorialized in the most literal sense: We have come to think of ourselves as nomads detached from our bioregions. Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987) “Body without Organs” ultimately fails as a metaphor because the fact is we have organs, and they are not just the soggy things inside but the chloroplasts, bugs, and atmospheric conditions “out there.” Of course, out there is always in here, in our guts and cells: It is empirically obvious that we are

not only children, sucking at our earth-mother's breast all of our lives, but that we are also mixed with, and part of, that which Europeans choose to call "the environment." For us, truly, there are no "surroundings."

I can lose my hands and still live. I can lose my legs and still live. I can lose my eyes and still live. I can lose my hair, eyebrows, nose, arms, and many other things and still live. But if I lose the air I die. If I lose the sun I die. If I lose the earth I die. If I lose the water I die. If I lose the plants and animals I die. All of these things are more a part of me, more essential to my every breath, than is my so-called body. What is my real body?

We are rooted, just like the trees. But our roots come out of our nose and mouth, like an umbilical cord, forever connected to the rest of the world. Our roots also extend out from our skin and from our other body cavities (Forbes, 1992). The job of the educator is to make accessible the secrets that remain hidden, repressed, censored. The strange zones of activity in between the boundaries, those glitches in the grid, those sites of shared strangeness unfamiliar to all of us require our attention. One obvious zone is the earth. Regardless of the contentious political, ethnic, sexual, and class backgrounds of our students and ourselves, we all ultimately occupy the same zone. Certainly matters of race, gender, sexuality, and class are intricately involved within such an ecological project, and Merchant (1992) presents useful strategies for making these connections in a pedagogical context. But the reality of a dying ecology is the umbrella under which all other realities and pursuits must be assembled. By this I do not mean the romantic dream of some pure, boundary-less heaven of multicultural unification. Instead, we need methods of tunneling under the walls and borders, into a common bedrock seen for the first time, in order to discover, literally, the bioregions we drive over, sleep in, eat, and dismantle. ☹

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Strictly Ballroom? Dancing along the Borders of Movement and Writing

Tim Doherty

When we imagine a typical scene of writing, we probably have an image of a seated writer, who occasionally paces, stretches, but is mostly stationary and alone. Certainly a glance in the doorways of most writing classes would reveal seated writers, either composing or talking. In an attempt to expand our sense of the possibilities beyond this static image, to broaden our vision of how writers' bodily experiences and various intelligences may be involved in the act of writing, Karen Klein and Linda Hecker (1994) have recently advocated two teaching strategies, "hands-on manipulatives" and "walking the structure," which

exploit the ideas of 'learning-by-doing,' cross-fertilizing students' linguistic abilities with spatial or kinesthetic intelligences. By working directly with students and observing their writing difficulties, [they] found that many individuals struggling to express their ideas on paper could build models of how ideas relate using colored pipe cleaners, Legos, or Tinkertoys, or they could walk those ideas across a room, changing direction to indicate changes in logical structure. (p. 89)

In the latter approach, the exact shape of an individual's "walk" or exploratory movement is "arbitrary" (Klein & Hecker, 1994, p. 93). Gross-motor experiences of ideas are more important than following the movement patterns set out by Klein and Hecker: "[I]n fact, individual students are encouraged to invent their own sets of moves, if that feels more comfortable to them.... It is the gross motor movement of arms and legs, hands and feet that makes the abstract both concrete and tactile" (p. 95).

Klein and Hecker's work illustrates the utility of movement in teaching writing. What impact, what contribution, can movement make in a given act of composing? Could we claim that, by attending to feeling and thought through movement, our expression is facilitated? Or are the modalities of movement and writing impermeable, untranslatable? Or, for writers, does movement altogether change what Alice Brand (1994) calls the "valuative" experience, the various ways thought and feeling may intertwine in mental activity (p. 156)?

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Translating Intelligences: Moving Words

Of course, it is tempting to be simplistic. Movement is suited to “hot,” vibrant expression; stationary writing lends itself to “cool,” conscious, rational processes (Brand, 1994). On the one hand, it seems common sense that movement is *more closely* connected to emotion than is the act of writing. Feeling and movement are both somatic—feeling happens “in” the body; movement happens “because of” or “with” the body. It is tempting to focus on the gulf between what we experience when dancing, compared to when talking or writing. Howard Gardner (1985), for example, claims that the bodily–kinesthetic mode of intelligence is identifiable in how we use tools, in how we dance, and in how we mimic. He posits this mode because, presumably, other intelligences somehow cannot capture its modality. Gardner provides a sense of these limits by quoting famous dancers on how “untranslatable” meaning is in dance:

And indeed, it is difficult to get dancers (or even dance critics) to characterize their activity in a straightforward and concrete way. Isadora Duncan...summed it up in her well-known remark, “If I could tell you what it is, I would not have danced it”... [and], Martha Graham... has made the intriguing observation, “I have often remarked on the extreme difficulty of having any kind of conversation with most dancers which has any kind of logical cohesiveness—their minds just jump around (maybe like my body)—the logic—such as it is—occurs on the level of motor activity.” (1985, p. 224)

Why use movement in a writing classroom if the boundaries allow little in the way of immigration? Because the boundaries are not impermeable. And Gardner is quick to emphasize that no single “intelligence” ever solely produces a given performance. In thinking about these boundaries or relationships between our intelligences, we have two approaches: First, we can go about our business, relatively unconscious of co-existing intelligences working in a coordinated way, such as when we dance. As my former student, Jen, once described: “You’re listening to music, utilizing an aural mindset and musical intelligence, and unconsciously, you’re translating what you hear into kinesthetic intelligence, and putting it literally into motion.” The second relationship is of a different, trickier sort. We can *consciously* try to create contexts in which various intelligences cross-fertilize, translate, or mingle. This may be the case, for example, when we present a painting to students and ask them to write their responses to it, the visual and linguistic intelligences orbiting one another, so to speak. Or when we ask children to listen to music and draw what they hear. This second kind of cross-fertilization of intelligences is ambiguous because it involves both a conscious mingling of how we act and know in different domains. But it also involves “a letting go,” listening to the music, allowing associations to occur, moving image to page, at times consciously, or semi-consciously, or unconsciously. Perhaps this “trickiness” is the paradox of conscious, creative intentions; success depends on the degree of unconscious “release,” an openness to “peak”

or “flow” experiences, once we have consciously set ourselves in a creative direction. It is also tricky in the sense that, phenomenologically, the moment-to-moment relationship between the intelligences involved in hearing, imagining, and drawing is hard to pin down: Is it one of cause/effect? Translation? Hybridization?

We know so little about the nature and creative possibilities of this conscious coordination of intelligences. I believe it is worth our time as writing teachers to explore it, warranting the use of movement as a way of shifting student awareness of thoughts and feelings into and out of somatic and linguistic action. A back-and-forth movement. Note how, having to *say* something about dance, Graham, in the earlier quote, does in fact capture a *sense* of how meaning operates in dance—it “jumps,” perhaps in the same way our visual intelligence operates by discrimination and gestalt.

Body sense is present across our experiences and actions, whether we are aware of it or not. Seated writers, consciously or not, have bodies involved in the act of writing, whether that involvement comes in the form of a felt sense, a frustration, the excited jiggling of a foot, the pauses and breaths between jottings, the voicing of words, or the subterranean murmur of inner speech. Individually, movement and writing are both tools that are expressive extensions of our bodies, in the sense described by Polanyi (1958): “We pour ourselves out into [our tools] and assimilate them as parts of our own existence. We accept them existentially by dwelling in them”(p. 59). My own wish, therefore, is to wonder about the role that a more extensive, deliberate use of “the body’s wisdom” can play in writing events.

We have a number of pedagogical strategies that can help students attend to their physical experience during composing: freewriting, Perl’s (1994) exercises for felt sense, Klein and Hecker’s (1994) “walking structures” and “hands-on manipulatives,” guided imagery related to a particular topic, visual representations, or even doodling. Presumably, by cross-fertilizing our different physical and cognized emotional lives, we ground or inhabit the moment of writing more cogently, successfully, or perhaps even surprisingly. Or, as Brand (1990) observes, “Learning that includes emotion has more stick-to-the-ribs quality than does ‘cold’ cognition and influences performance years later” (p. 306). However, the present culture of most classrooms limits our vision of what is “appropriate” and helpful to better writing. Movement in a writing course seems tantamount to “dirty dancing” in the ballroom. What *can* movement offer writers? In given composing scenarios, how can movement shape their emotional and cognitive experiences? I am trying to make more room *culturally* for the vital role that intrapersonal intelligence can play in this process. Nevertheless, I also embrace the caveat made by Klein and Hecker that movement-based approaches to writing “do not work for everyone,” but should be presented as valued options in a student-centered pedagogy (1994, p. 98).

Two recent experiments suggest directions for those interested in this line of inquiry, teaching, and learning: a collaborative one between the philosopher Robert Schwarz (1993) and the dancer Christina Svane; and the other, a project completed by Jo-Ann, a student dancer in an experimental course I co-taught with Margaret Daisley at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In the latter

instance, I functioned as a participant-observer, seeking to understand how one student conceived of movement-writing connections, and how both I and her peers responded. I will tell both of these anecdotes and then conclude by reflecting on their implications for the teaching of writing.

Dancing into a Different Space

In October of 1992, the contact dancer Christina Svane and philosopher Robert Schwarz conducted a seminar at the School for New Dance Development in Amsterdam, entitled "Spatial Orientation: A Key to Meaning in Thought and Movement." Schwarz (1993) collaborated with contact dancers, exploring concepts of space and "the role that body postures and movements play in the processes of abstract thinking" (p. 45). In effect, Schwarz and Svane wanted the dancers to try to change their sense of space as a separate "thing," around which bodies move, to an understanding that space inheres in the experience of movement itself. They encouraged the dancers to experience spatial concepts as the metaphors they are, linguistic constructs for the human experience of motion and mass.

Drawing on the works of Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1987), Schwarz first provided lectures describing the central metaphors that can be found underlying the discourses of philosophy, law, religion, and science (verticality and hierarchy being the most obvious), and the relationships of these metaphors to "motional meaning": "[T]he key words which seem to advance any discourse are words of motion" (Schwarz, 1993, p. 47). He deduces that motion guides all thought processes, and that

[s]pace, time, mass, gravity, inertia, and countless other essential abstractions from which our reality is formed are not so much external *a priori* givens as they are *a posteriori* creations out of the matrix of body experience. (p. 48).

Schwarz's objective was to help the dancers realize this new body-space relationship. A conceptual transformation of space is created "inside" their experiences of moving. Movement and thought become inseparable.

After the lectures by Schwarz, Svane led the dancers through movement sessions, intended to effect new, non-reified, body-centered orientations to space. Svane's term for this phenomenon is the "now-plane" (Schwarz, 1993, p.44). While dancing, participants attempted to "turn about" a spatial concept in their minds, trying to locate the way in which they conceptualize through the motions of their body. The dancers' journals suggest that they moved with a spatial term in mind, such as "along" or "beside," and then somehow attempted to release that word into the motions of their bodies, "letting go" of the "idea" of the term. Integrating thought and movement, the dancers were re-orienting or "mingling" their physical and conceptual senses of "movement," "space," "dance," and so on. Svane and Schwarz sought to effect these "conceptual transformations" for the dancers through a conscious interpenetration of movement, discussion, and writing. In their journal reflections, often in imagistic, metaphoric,

associative form, many of the dancers report powerful transformations in their approach to contact dance:

Mary Overlie: I had a very strong and amazing experience when I worked by myself with the word ‘through’ in conjunction with moving without the concept of space. I suddenly had a whole new movement vocabulary available to me (p. 44).... It was astonishing to me that when Christie and I did some Contact work with these words [with, until, carry], we were able to be in the Contact dance with such completeness and clarity. (p. 50)

Katinka Bosse: It was new, every single little sensation, sound, emotion, posture.... While this [dance] went on...10% of my conscious mind...was still able to put labels on the “happening”: phrase it, recognize it, compare it, evaluate it. (p. 52)

Christina Svane: So many layers to be aware of. This process has a preparation phase. The Now Plane does hinge upon the body. The body needs time to remember its own complex chords. One doesn’t hear all the instruments in the orchestra at once. Roving is part of Now. Images fleet. A fleet of images. An association seems the next step. Images first. Awareness. Image. Association. (p. 48)

Jo-Ann’s Movers and Witnesses

In the Spring semester of 1993, Margaret Daisley and I co-taught an experimental writing class in which we explored with nine students the ways of integrating the arts of performance and writing. The second half of the course was entirely devoted to student projects and experiments, one of which, Jo-Ann’s, involved us in forging movement–writing connections. Based on her past training and experience in dance, Jo-Ann believed in what she termed “the body’s voice,” “a nonverbal voice,” a way in which the moving body itself has something to “say.” What intrigued her most were the “connections and gaps” between embodied and textual “voice.” Her inquiry into these possible relationships involved us in “deep movement” exercises, which were followed by freewriting. Jo-Ann’s sense of the “connections and gaps” are best summed up in this excerpt from her project narrative:

Rhythm is a central defining feature in dance and in writing. Voice, in writing and dance, becomes apparent in the pauses; shaped by where one stops, and for how long, and at what level. Are you left hanging in the air, or heavy on the ground? How does the writing/dance flow, how intense is it? Does it creep low, slowly, timidly with caution or tenderness, or is it running, leaping, spinning so fast that it seems like the ground/page will explode? And breath... where does the writer/dancer stop to breathe? Are you

breathless or deeply sustained in full breaths that give lustre to every word/gesture? (1993, p.2)

To begin her project, Jo-Ann asked us to stand in a circle and to warm up physically through stretching and relaxation exercises. Then, she dimmed the lights and divided us into two groups, five lounging on the floor, five others standing, encircling them. As her project unfolded, her voice was steady and soothing:

The group on the floor are movers; the group standing around them are witnesses. In your own time, movers, close your eyes, and allow your body to move, any way it wants, and when it does, let whatever thoughts happen, happen—impulses, intuitions, images. This is like freewriting: freedancing. Witnesses, all you need to do is to keep the movers safe, keep them from hitting the walls or one another. Just watch, but also pay attention to your own thoughts and reactions. (Doherty,1993)

Now, almost a year later, I remember well my participation in Jo-Ann's project. During the movement phase, vivid images and thoughts came to my mind. Concurrent with an upward reach, I saw a brilliant night sky. Concurrent with a wing-like movement, I recalled images of dreams in which I could fly. Jo-Ann urged us to envision our bodies and movements as extensions of our writing selves. Because she was interested in the "connections and gaps" between the embodied and written voice, the last phase of her project had two parts: a mixture of dance and utterance—what one student later called "movement poetry"—and then quiet freewriting, intended to connect the page to our previous movements. In the first part, the group spontaneously danced together without music, some gliding, others just gesturing slowly. As we moved, Jo-Ann urged us to express words spontaneously, and after our initial nervousness and laughter, out they flowed, pell-mell. It was hilarious and exhilarating. Needless to say, we were a trusting, tight-knit group.

After the exercises, we sat quietly, freewriting in our journals:

Jen: Can't put words to what I saw. No words in emotions, no words in movements, no words in reaction. Just movement.

David: I felt like I could go on forever like that... the movement poetry was also enlivening. I felt like I took it to heart, and kept expressing that lonely line [sic] I had explored in the pure movement exercise.... I found movements shaping words, words forming movements....

From Tim's journal: I began to have images of a night sky, trees outlined in blue and black shadow, and the green shoots of garlic in the garden.... As a witness, I tried to imagine what was happening

for each person. Were they simply moving on impulse—like Glenn seemed to be? Was Nicole rocking and almost motionless most of the time because of some deeply felt connection? The voices of their bodies—a sleeper, one yawning and gathered into motion, one rocking in a center. (1993)

Stacey: How can we express ourselves w/o the constraints of words?...Movement. Movement seems so natural and uninhibited—that's the way I imagine a dancer must feel—uninhibited—so flexible to stretch their limbs gracefully, diagonally, horizontally. Stand up tall and extend your muscles, point and flex your toes, Roll your head. A goal of mine w/my writing is to abandon all of these constraints and be able to dance with my pen [sic., an illustration trailing off of the "E"]. (1993)

Movement along the Continuum

In thinking about both of these experiments, to make sense of the many ways movement and words interact, involving different cognitive and emotional experiences for writers, we can draw on the work of Alice Brand (1994). To understand the various ways emotion and thought co-exist, she uses the metaphor of a continuum, along which we might plot shifting ratios of cognition and emotion, depending upon the kind of experience we are having: From the “cool,” “slanted toward cerebration,” to the “hot,” “weighted toward feeling” (p. 155). Even though the “entire person” is the site for learning, there is heuristic, analytical value in such metaphoric separations, helping us appreciate the nuances of interrelated thought and feeling.

Adapting Brand's (1994) “continuum,” we can try to make sense of the ways movement and writing produce, in conjunction, a variety of “valuative experiences”—Brand's term for the complex interaction of arousal, motivation, cognition, and emotion. On the one end, as we move, we may experience something akin to arousal, what Brand and others call “felt sense” or “protoemotion.” Such an experience is prelinguistic, precognitive because it involves no “names.” On the other end, as we move, we may have something akin to a cognitive, linguistic experience, a fully felt and named emotion or thought. In the middle, movement and reflection are ways of bringing felt sense into conscious awareness. Movement is a way of “attending,” the entire physical body participating in the process of thinking and feeling, moving toward greater consciousness and verbalization.

By virtue of this sort of continuum, we can appreciate a progression among the experiences of both the contact dancers (identified by last names) and Jo-Ann's participants (identified by first names), a progression from relatively unconscious, non-verbalized movement, to experiences of images, to a word-richness triggered by, or continuous with, movement itself:

“No words in movements. No words...” Jen

For Jen, no words could capture the kind of knowing and experiencing of

movement. Words are absent in what Jo-Ann called the “body’s voice.” Svane’s “now-plane” seems comparable.

“10% of my conscious mind...” Bosse

Just as we begin to attend to meaning in the course of moving, things may begin to make sense. Images, words, and feelings may be only vague “blips” at first, as on a radar. My own initial reaction was relatively uncognized. Immediately after, I recorded it as “impulses to move a limb—not very conscious, but sometimes moved because of an intruding thought ‘have to move,’ or a sudden awareness of witnesses or noise upstairs.” The dancer Bosse, as well, seems to describe this phenomenon: “While this [dance] went on...10% of my conscious mind...was still able to put labels on the ‘happening.’” (Schwarz, 1993, p. 52)

“Images fleet. A fleet of images. An association seems the next step.” Svane

Insofar as images and memories are evoked during movement, our post-movement, freewritten record of them may begin to capture the texture and substance of a movement experience. The image-word interaction is also another dimension of “mingled” intelligences. During movement the visual and auditory modes are triggered simultaneously. The majority of my own movement experience was imagistic: “I began to have images of a night sky, trees outlined in blue and black shadow, and the green shoots of garlic in the garden.”

“I found movements shaping words, words forming movements.” David

For David words “happened” while he was moving, but he also seemed to explore a “line” in both the “pure movement” and “movement poetry” phases of Jo-Ann’s project. Here, as in improvisation, censorship loosens. Movement becomes heuristic, opening the door to linguistic performance. To the extent that ideas themselves are evoked as we move, words may begin to mix with, or capture, the knowing and experiencing of movement. As a moment-to-moment phenomenon, such a relationship is indeed “tricky,” hard to put into words alone. Schwarz and Svane also encouraged the dancers to begin with a “motional term” like “through” or “around.” Overlie’s experience attests to the power of this approach: “I suddenly had a whole new movement vocabulary available to me.” (Schwarz, 1993, p. 44)

“to dancE with my pen” Stacey

Finally, there may be a post-movement effort to translate in words that “feel” right. Through the medium of words, we “feel through” or “convey” the movement experience. Most of the dancers in Schwarz and Svane’s experiment use writing as a post-movement processing of the subtle and intricate discoveries and experiences they have had (Schwarz’s essay describing his project includes a total of fifteen written “reports” by the dancers).

The above “progression” mirrors Brand’s (1994) continuum, though I should echo her cautions about overlap and complexity (p. 156). In general, I speculate that the emergence of sense through movement and into words depends on

- our motives for using movement: to experience the “body’s voice” for

its own sake; to discover meanings and felt sense; to explore a pre-determined word or idea;

- the confidence, ease, mood, or attitude of the mover, itself shaped by the immediate context and its climate;
- the trust of the group;
- the intensity of the movement experience;
- the highly particular experience in space–time;
- the nature of the emerging and often simultaneous emotions, images, and sensations; and
- the kind of writing we are doing, before, during and/or after the movements (recording, freewriting, reflecting, integrating into a larger essay).

It seems clear from their writings that Schwarz and Svane’s dancers perceived afresh the central ideas of their art. Jo-Ann’s movers and witnesses, through combined movement and writing, experienced sensations, images, words, and ideas that writing without movement would not have produced. Moreover, these dancers literally and figuratively moved beyond verbs, the traditional words of action, transforming prepositions and adverbs into a new “movement vocabulary.” The material in both experiments may be viewed as reflective, linguistic cross-fertilizings of somatically transformed thinking. They seem shaped by the movement experiences themselves, leading the dancers into memories, associations, metaphors—the stuff of poems. Both of these “movement-language events” reveal a strong bond between what was felt and what was uttered; as a result, learning had a “stick-to-the-ribs” quality.

As teachers, we can integrate movement into writing classes in different ways and to different degrees, depending on several factors. From the systematic connections made by Klein and Hecker between movement and the progression of thought in writing, to Jo-Ann’s more open-ended, intuitive approaches to freewriting and “freedancing,” our choices depend on our objectives and our willingness to take risks. We might ask students who are reading and writing about social issues to examine the metaphors of their own and others’ writings, to detect the emotional-cognitive “movements” of thought, and to weave within their reading and writing processes their own movement explorations.

But there are simpler, easier beginnings: I use movement for writers to warm up and explore persona in text through physical, gestural activities such as facial expressions or “walks” used in conjunction with oral reading (see Johnstone, 1981, on “status”). Peter Elbow (1995) also offers a number of ways of incorporating physical performance into reading and writing activities, such as choral readings and tableaux.

Clearly, movement takes time, and often the movement-writing connection, in its complex manifestations, is not an efficient, instrumental means to finished written products. It is more about expanding our sense of what learning can be and about connecting our multiple intelligences. To do this as teachers, we must try to create a reassuring climate that diminishes self-consciousness and embarrassment. We may feel safe relegating movement to a pre-writing stage of com-

posing, and no doubt any greater role summons a changed vision: writers out of their seats; writers moving their bodies; writers transforming these experiences into meaning. In essence, such images are a challenge to the prevailing culture of what counts as learning, knowledge, and writing. ☺

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The Subversive Element of Play: Using Play, Dream and the Body in the Classroom

Ellen W. Kaplan

On the summit of Mt. Greylock, mid-hike on a Sunday, my family and I witnessed an event that transformed us from casual observers into enthralled spectators. Three “actors” were engaged in an extraordinary performance: They were preparing to leap off a cliff. We stood spellbound as they unfurled their gear, strapped themselves into it, and soared aloft. The performers, who received warm applause from the folks gathered around, were hang gliders. As an actor and acting teacher, I was struck by the analogy to theater: the concentration, the risk, the resistance to obstacle (gravity).

Acting, at its best, is like jumping off a cliff: intense, detailed preparation followed by a jump into the unknown; playful improvisation within constraints; clarity and precision in observation; responsiveness to minute and ever-changing stimuli, and, above all, trust of our resources, trust of the body; feeling, reacting in the moment to catch a current and stay aloft.

Hang gliding, like acting, is an embodied experience; the knowing is in the doing. And learning to do it, so gliders say, comes from the “playing around” they can only do in the air. Knowing, doing, and playing are inextricably linked through the body—which is not to suggest that intellectual knowing is irrelevant. An ability to understand and analyze the engineering principles behind glider design or the aerodynamic principles that govern wind currents is essential knowledge for anyone wishing to leave the ground. But, plainly, one can’t fly if one doesn’t fly.

An embodied experience puts body knowledge at the center of learning, the sensate often unvoiced and unexamined knowledge that is part of a body’s history. But, like that which exists in dream and fantasy, what the body can’t tell us is valid precisely because it is often farthest from the reach of social prescription and the authority of others.

The mind abstracts experience, names, and categorizes it, bringing it into conformity with the already known, the normative, the accepted. But the body resists. It knows and has the capacity to act on its knowledge. Dance theorist Randy Martin (1990) finds that the body in action threatens to subvert rational order, because it may well be a more reliable source of knowledge than the “polluted” (i.e., socially influenced) mind. In this sense valuing embodied experience is fundamental to personal autonomy, to what Bruno Bettelheim (1960)

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calls a person's "inner ability to govern [him or herself]" (p. 74). The very materiality of the body makes it a subject, a site of agency; its actuality, its "presence," is intrinsic to agency.

Meaning, like agency, is directly linked to bodily experience. Mark Johnson (1987), formulating a position that "put[s] the body back into the mind" (p. xxxvi), contends that much of our understanding of the world takes the form of "metaphorical projection from the realm of physical bodily interactions onto so-called rational processes" (p. xx). In other words, meaning is derived from our bodily experience; the meaning of balance, for example, (literal *and* conceptual; the latter elaborated in metaphor) emerges from physical acts of balancing.

Acting—performing—is body-centered knowing. There is a chasm between my everyday self and the body that reveals itself in performance. When I act, the shift in my physical life alters my perception. My understanding shifts with alterations in alignment, adjustments to my spine, changes in my center of gravity, pauses in the rhythms of my breath. Paring my toenails with a rusty knife, gripping the earth with strong ankles and bare toes as the peasant Agata in Betti's *Goat Island* (1966), profoundly alters my preverbal, precognitive understanding. I play the lover of a woman (with whom I am unacquainted) and inhibition is replaced by intimacy; I act differently until "the act" is over. What I experience in those moments is an alternative self, a way of processing experience that comes from re-ordering it, the stuff of creativity.

Repression and Subjugation of the Body

Society demands regulation of the body; we contain it: what flows from it, the space it occupies, the magnitude of its gestures, the loudness of its sounds. But prohibition, censure, the filtering of impulse have corrosive effects on individuals *and* the larger community, both of which are diminished by their inability to use the unexpected gesture as a source of knowledge. Reclaiming the body, unlocking and welcoming it also releases the voice. Helene Cixous (1981), speaking of women's bodies as "confiscated," says, "Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time. Write your self. Your body must be heard" (p. 250). Fluency, expressiveness, and the body's disinhibition are interconnected qualities, with social and political implications beyond personal/psychological ones. The needs of communities to regulate themselves are valid, but so too are the need of individuals' to assert themselves, to question, to advocate, to find and use their voices. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (1992) makes a strong point about the ownership of meaning: "[Language/the word] exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions;...one must take the work, and make it 'one's own'" (p. 44). A pluralistic, participatory society needs individuals who can make the *word* their own and become the *authors* of that experience.

Playing and Doing

The body knows because it *does*. Doing relates to the world; we are social "actors," and we change the world with our acts. Play, an "as if" doing, may be a rehearsal for life, but it is also a rehearsal for social change. Perhaps, echoing

Augusto Boal (1979), we could take the idea further: “Theater is action! Perhaps not revolutionary in itself; but...a rehearsal of revolution” (p. 155).

When we play, we set up alternate worlds; we create an artifice, a structure of rules that may mirror, invert, or negate the restrictions of everyday life. We re-arrange, explode, connect, juxtapose, by virtue of our curiosity alone. Play is both unruly and rule-bound, expansive and subversive; the release of energy, desire, voice and power that emanates from playful bodies is disturbing and often liberating.

In *Art as Experience* (1934) John Dewey traces the Western predilection for opposing play, the arts, all things physical, material, and actual with an emphasis on abstraction and the ideal. But the serious play of art, doing, being, and making contains within it the potential for transformation, the possibility of redefining ourselves (and our students) as *meaning-creating* beings.

Going Inside

For several years while working in rural Pennsylvania and inner city Philadelphia, I gave workshops in writing and creative drama for special education students (i.e., those identified with severe mental and physical impairments or social maladjustment), ranging in age from kindergarten to high school. In a room of rowdy and rambunctious kids who had been classified as disabled or disturbed, I asked who in the room considered themselves a poet. Not too many students responded “yes.” Very few teenagers are eager to call themselves poets under any circumstances, certainly not in front of their friends and especially not to some stranger who’s dumb enough to *admit* to being an actor and, worse, a writer. Yet, these were kids with more passion and poetry and vivid insight than could fit on the page. By what definition were they not budding, incipient poets?

What didn’t work in these classrooms was instantly apparent: I couldn’t go in and say, for example: Let’s get out on the floor and act; Let’s pretend to be other people, move from impulse, or be playful. Using your body is a commitment; dignity and psychological candor are at stake. The deep silent breathing, guided imagery, and free play with music that comprise the typical entry for beginning actors was out of the question; the risks for these students were too great.

Every age group presented different challenges, of course. But what worked consistently was finding the “group temperature,” a sense of the dynamics, personalities, issues, and weaving a story with them that spoke out who they were in that moment. Responses to a simple set of questions (Where would we be if we weren’t here? Describe it, envision it, see it, say it. Who’s there? Who’s talking? What do you see there that makes you angry? What do you do about it? How does it change? Is there a lesson?) became an out-loud story we created and shared. From there we would make an environment and live in it, move through it, respond to it: a riverbed, a drive-in. And trust a story to emerge.

With some groups the work remained preverbal; with others, dialogue and role-play allowed for reworking dramatic material from students’ own lives. In one third grade class, for example, Aesop’s fable, “The Lion and the Mouse,” developed into a parable about an uncle jailed for selling drugs and the child’s ambivalence toward him. She understood the dramatic action by embodying it.

She scurried, nibbled, squealed, and hid in the face of danger (in her neighborhood), and he protected her from harm. But when he needed her help (in this case, her acceptance), she had to make choices about loyalty and her own sense of moral behavior; she communicated her inner struggles eloquently and acted on her decisions; in fact, she felt she couldn't stick by him, contrary to the mouse in the fable. She and her classmates explored and considered the implications of all this in the context of play.

Through this work I found voices and bodies responding accurately to inner impulses. Two years ago, in Orange, Massachusetts, I developed a theater piece at a literacy center that celebrated the history of this rural town and the grit of its inhabitants. At first the adults who wrote and performed *Hometown Tales* looked at the blank page as a mortal enemy (the empty stage filled them with an even greater degree of terror). They began slowly, telling stories about their working lives, then recording and rewriting and shaping those stories into monologues. A few brave individuals began to improvise, writing on their feet, so to speak. And little by little they faced down the empty page, some beginning to express themselves in bursts of raw, gutsy writing. Others worked with dialogue, exploring an issue from two perspectives. Many found that not only had they something to say, but they could say it and enjoy the experience. As one student stated after the performance, "You know, you can act. You can really act. A lot of people out there, they don't really realize what they can do.... When you do it,... you'd be a lot more stronger about things" (Kingsley, 1993, p. 15).

Principles and Strategies

How do we make the body and its experience available to writers/performers? The trick is to find the strategies that unhook buttoned-up creativity in students and channel it into forms that strengthen their expression. The problems of self-censorship and stereotypical thinking haunt every classroom. With my special students (many of whom were highly expressive verbally and physically but unable to articulate their insights), I used some of the same basic strategies that I use in teaching acting, strategies designed to unleash the stream of imagery and association we carry with us, and designed to connect this inner life with physical impulse.

Crossing the Border

In acting classes I often layer in core images and texts, myth, music, fragments of poetry, and dream journals to provide stimuli. In one class we used myths of transformation to create a theater collage entitled *Crossing the Border*. In small groups the class worked through a process of physical exploration, journal and poetry writing, mimesis, interview, and historical research to create short improvisational pieces. The texts included selections from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, an Inuit creation story, a Japanese legend about a geisha who turns into a cat, and fragments of a tale from *The Arabian Nights*.

The process (which took place over several weeks) follows: First, the myths are read aloud to the "dreamers," all the actors who are in a quiet state; they then

draw their dream/responses without giving thought to the literal content, but working from sense impressions and fleeting images. With music serving as a focus, the actors envision and slowly move into the landscape they have imagined. Supported by quiet side-coaching, they use movement and sensory response to create an evocative terrain of obstacles, attractions, fearful and forceful objects. Actors then focus on a powerful sensory event: the sound of an axe, the smell of plantains. They allow it to act on them, to effect movement, motive, and imagery. Voices might whisper in the shadows; others might live here. Actors begin to find a character, what that character wants, how that character experiences this place. The actor then creates a ritual activity with significance to his or her imaginary life. Finally, each actor recovers something of value and leaves.

The private experience of the actors now needs to be shaped and shared. The actors, working in the voice of their embryonic characters, write poems and read them aloud in small groups. The groups are able to discern motifs, points of connection and contradiction; this leads to discussion and the initial staging of the myth.

As the rehearsal progresses the groups research sources, keep a dream journal, and write personal response material, including a dramatic monologue. Music is chosen, visual images are collected, text is written, and the piece is rehearsed. Each actor within the group takes on the function of writer, designer, director, or choreographer. The final phase involves structuring a group piece that often incorporates elements of the myth with poetry, music, staging, and dialogue.

Lynne

The progress that one student, Lynne, made through this work illustrates both its effectiveness and its drawbacks. Lynne is a nontraditional student with no background in writing or performing; her reasons for taking the class were, she said, shyness and discomfort with her body. In one preparatory activity in which the class began from silence and gradually connected movement to breath, Lynne remained virtually frozen on the floor. When we added text (using phrases like “Voice,” “My voice,” “I can speak,” and then bits of poetry), she whispered softly but began to move more freely. Only when we wrote short passages after the experience, however, could she explore and expand on her feelings.

Things changed for Lynne when she was asked to come to class as a seven-year-old child. “That’s when I got past the adult part, the judging part. I got to the child...the one I wanted to be, not the one that I was.” She was becoming attuned to the impulses beneath her movements as well. When her group chose to work on “Orpheus and Eurydice,” they contemporized the story. It became one of betrayal and loss of self; Eurydice was lost in a private hell, mesmerized by a musician boyfriend who seduced her and saved her only to hurt her again in a cycle of abuse, abandonment, and rescue. Lynne found this character’s voice in a powerful, beautifully rendered monologue of a battered woman. (She told me later that she had not experienced this herself but had gained insight through empathy, role-play, and research.) Cheryl, her Eurydice in the monologue, seemed

to disappear in her lover, living through and for him, justifying his behavior, unable to extricate herself. Eurydice's hell was the loss of her own identity and the abuse she withstood. The rescue of the myth was turned on its head. Cheryl finally had the courage to leave her abusive lover.

Keys to the Kingdom

In staging the myths students found connections between their own lives and the texts that were released and enriched by the playful and uncensored use of their bodies. Let me list the basic elements which need to be integrated into this work:

- Physical warmups, not calisthenics, but free movement connecting body, breath, image, and impulse;
- Inner listening (deep relaxation, meditation, focus on breath) to become aware of the flow of images inside;
- Sensory work to sharpen perception;
- Countering the inner censor that is tied to shame (This means working against an atmosphere of discomfort with oddity, emotion, the "too-big" response.);
- Respecting muscle memory, following physical impulse; and
- Welcoming the random, the chaotic, the unpredictable.

There is a need to "three-dimensionalize" learning, to consider body, emotion, intuition, and imagination as partners with intellect. There are strong pedagogical reasons to consider teaching literature through rhythm, science through simulation, and politics through role-play. As we endorse playful ways of learning, we also move toward interdisciplinary, less field-specific approaches.

Play is work or at least it might be. Anthropologist Victor Turner (1982) wrote a series of essays subtitled "The Human Seriousness of Play" in which he explains how play, which is a form of work for a child, may also perform work in society. In preindustrial cultures, he suggests, play contains "the seeds of cultural transformation, discontent with the way things are culturally, and social criticism" (p. 45). The opportunity to "play" with variables, to experiment beyond the limits of the norm, to offer freedom from constraint, is what makes play ergic or work-like; play changes society, or rather, allows the experimentation beyond constraint that contains the seeds of change. The ergic potential of play is restricted in industrial societies; the question is to what extent might we be able to make use of its power.

Through play we meet a different order of knowing, a way of knowing in which, to paraphrase Henri Bergson (1946), we place ourselves directly at the heart of the subject. We do with our bodies, and doing is a way of knowing. Play, which is an unencumbered doing in an "as if" world, is a crucial part of the way we know. ☺

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The Found Play: Learning and Teaching the Value of Interpretive Reading and Writing

Randi Patterson and Kim Jernigan

What is important is not to elaborate and disseminate knowledge about literature (in "literary histories") but to show literature to be a mediator of knowledge.

Roland Barthes

In traditional language education, the value of interpretive reading and writing is usually taken for granted. As educators, we focus on reading literary works and writing critically about them with the underlying assumption that this type of reading and writing is valuable. However, many entry level students aren't so sure. "Why must we take apart this story or poem? Isn't the experience of reading it enough? Surely the writer didn't intend for us to waste time thinking about this structure or image pattern. Where do you get all this?" Despite some resistance, students and educators are comfortable conceptualizing a literary text (canonical or not) primarily as a "thing," an artistic artifact or cultural icon worthy of study for its own sake, aesthetic pleasure, or historical-cultural representation. By conceptualizing the literary text as aesthetic object, we encourage both mute aesthetic response and thematic and/or cultural criticism. This approach is itself necessary, but limited. Students are unsure of the value of interpretation itself, the importance and utility of the practice of critical reading and writing. Consequently, we must teach the nature and value of interpretation explicitly.

If we focus on the work as both artifact and interpretive act, two types of interpretation are involved: authorial interpretation (the act of writing as both conscious and unconscious interpretation) and readerly interpretation. Because both are acts of interpretation, what the reader does can be seen as an extension of what the author does, rather than, as some students believe, antithetical to it or nonexistent. As such and arguably most important, the text is a medium that enables us to see the value of our own acts of interpretation, our own readerly processes.

What is at issue here is not simply the difference between product and

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process, but between our conceptualization and separation of “knowledge” as fact or artifact and “knowing” as a meaning-making process. While we strongly agree with critics such as Louise Rosenblatt (1978) and Stanley Fish (1980) that a transactional or interpretive theory of reading is necessary to effective reading and writing, most educators today are under pressure to acknowledge the role played by factual knowledge. However, we believe that this notion must be considered in any comprehensive articulation of the nature of “knowledge,” a word which, after all, has both noun and verb forms.

Theorists as disparate as the hermeneutic philosopher Paul Ricoeur and the progressive educational psychologist Howard Gardner agree that interpretation, as a conscious cognitive skill, is invaluable in the search for self-knowledge and the need to overcome unconscious, limiting habits of thought. For Ricoeur (1981) hermeneutics involves not only a resolution of conflicting interpretations, but more importantly, the search for self-understanding by means of cultural works, particularly works of art. Gardner urges “education for understanding,” whereby one attains “a sufficient grasp of concepts, principles, or skills so that one can bring them to bear on new problems and situations, deciding in which ways one’s present competencies can suffice and in which ways one may require new skills or knowledge” (1991, p.18).

In order to focus our students’ attention on the literary work as an interpretive act deriving both from the author’s conscious and unconscious shaping of experience and the nature of language itself, we developed an exercise that requires students to eavesdrop on an actual conversation and then transcribe and shape this conversation into a short dramatic scene or “found” play. This exercise allows them to come at a literary artifact from the perspective of writer, performer, and critical reader by finding, enacting, and responding to a drama in their own domain. As we discovered, three types of interpretation are juxtaposed and made conscious in this project. When students turn actual dialogue into a play, they discover for themselves that the literary artifact is itself a work of interpretation—their own. When the work is performed, they discover that there are additional levels of mediation (such as casting, setting, symbols, and word choice) which also influence interpretation. Finally, when evaluation takes place (self, peer, and instructor), students engage in the act of critical interpretation with which we are most familiar. By identifying these types of interpretations, we had been privileging literary criticism as evaluation and not teaching the value of interpreting the text as itself a work of both authorial and readerly hermeneutics.

In order to take readers through our process, we outline the origins of the found play project, present a brief found play, examine the types of interpretation at work during the three main phases of the project, and articulate the pedagogical advantages of the project as a whole.

Origins of the Project (Kim)

I devised this exercise for a first-year genres course (i.e., short stories, drama, novels, and poetry), the sort of course that attracts both students for whom it will be the only English course they take at the university and those for whom it is

the entry course into an English major. In Ontario first year students are typically 18 or 19 years old, though a number of second and third year students and returning students extended the age range to 45. Consequently, students diverged both in their ability and their enthusiasm for the kind of close analysis we practiced in class. For some, criticism seemed to diminish their emotional response to a literary work without increasing their intellectual or aesthetic engagement in it or their understanding of the way language, inevitably, shapes their own experience. The question of authorial intent was often the stickler, that is, the question of whether criticism is a matter of perceiving or interpreting meaning or of simply extracting what the author has "put into" the text. Students were willing to accept both the constructed nature of the text and also the possibility that the act of construction might be partly intuitive, conditioned by the author's own psychology, culture, or historical and economic position. But they felt confident neither of their ability to divine the author's intention nor of their right to interpret the text.

The term hermeneutics means not only to interpret but to translate into one's own idiom. I wanted an exercise that would help my students see how they selected, framed, and patterned the details of ordinary life in order to make it meaningful. I wanted them to understand that shaping the play was eased or frustrated by language, that is, how language both reflects and constructs the world. By having them play author, and then allowing the class to respond to their work, I hoped to demonstrate how a text can sustain a variety of interpretations, not all of which are subject to the author's control.

A number of other educators have demonstrated the effectiveness of creative writing as a means to critical reading (see Bowen, 1993; Gebhardt, 1988). Of particular relevance to the found play exercise is Peter Parisi's (1979) contention that creative writing, when offered for class discussion, can focus students' attention on the indeterminacy of their own language and on the way both the writing of a primary text and its subsequent reading are interpretative acts. By observing what students make of their own work, their peers come to appreciate that language is not so much "the transparent garment of the writer's thought" as "a locus of...possible meanings" which an adept reader or writer can "sense, control, and ultimately exploit (p.64).

The Found Play (Randi)

The project began with this basic intent: to personalize both authorial intent and critical interpretation. The students were not asked to create a play, but to form actual dialogue, so they could experience how the author molds and thus interprets experience without the overwhelming task of imagining a play. Kim introduced it as an impromptu exercise, marking the transition from their study of short fiction to drama. I subsequently wrote the project into the course, supplementing class discussion with written responses from students in their dual role as playwright and critic.

The plays ranged from social realism to theater of the absurd, from farce to self-reflexive metadrama, plays that call attention to the process of their own construction. Circular forms were popular; and most, like the one below, pre-

sented a slice of student or family life. The following play is typical of what students produced or found, both in its personal subject matter and its seeming inconsequentiality.

Dinner Table Talk (Ang Vachon)

Characters: Mom, Dad, Teenage Daughter, and Younger Daughter.

Mom: [*yells*] Dinner!

[*Mom, Dad, and Younger Daughter all sit down at the dinner table. Mom and Dad are discussing their days.*]

Mom: I was talking to my sister today, and she told me that Brian cries every day when she drops him off at school. He says he hates his teacher.

Dad: [*uninterested*] Oh, yeah.

Younger Daughter: [*whining*] Mom, cut the fat off my meat.

Mom: [*yelling*] Becky! It's dinner time!

Dad: [*sarcastic*] She's probably on the phone again!

Younger Daughter: Why do we always have to have salad?

Mom: Because it's good for you. Now stop asking questions and eat your dinner.

[*Older Daughter sits down at the table.*]

Older Daughter: Pork chops are so gross! They're fattening and I don't want one.

Younger Daughter: [*whining again*] I have to eat my salad so she has to eat her meat!

Older Daughter: [*says to sister*] You be quiet! [*turns to mother*] But Mom! I'm on a diet!

Mom: [*frustrated*] I don't care. Do what you want!

Younger Daughter: Danny had to sit in the thinking chair today because he spit in Jenny's hair.

Older Daughter: We're eating! Don't tell us your gross stories now!

Dad: Be nice to your sister.

Older Daughter: Well, tell her not to....

[*Telephone rings. The Older Daughter jumps up to answer it.*]

Older Daughter: I'll get it! [*She exits.*]

Levels of Interpretation

The Play as Artifact: "Writing" the Found Play (Kim)

Our instructions were minimal as to what constitutes a play. We asked students to listen for a bit of dialogue that had some sort of dramatic tension. We stressed that they need not reproduce the found text exactly, that they could trust memory to select the significant detail, intuition to shape it, and intellect to name it. Supplying a title was the one overtly interpretive gesture they needed to make.

The first thing the students were able to see was how the most mundane exchange became significant as soon as they lifted it from the quotidian, framed it, and set it before an audience. Presenting life as a literary artifact creates the *illusion* that everything is significant and connected. Because the found dialogues were isolated and transformed, the class saw them as cohesive texts and automatically treated them as meaningful and the details symbolic.

The intention of the author of *Dinner Table Talk* was to present a slice of ordinary family talk—fragmented and discontinuous—as opposed to sitcom family conversation. She claimed not to have given much thought as to how to give it aesthetic form. However, the class saw the telephone as a framing device. The teenage daughter is presumably late for dinner because she is on the telephone. She subsequently uses the telephone to escape from the dinner table and the tension she has helped create. What is ordinarily a vehicle of communication becomes, ironically, a symbol of the failure to communicate. The teenager's refusal to hear her younger sister's concerns is prefigured by the father's failure to attend to the mother and undermines the sincerity of his imperative, "Be nice to your sister." The play contains a number of passing references to culturally engendered values (for instance, the importance that teenage girls attach to being thin) and the whole argument around food is perhaps emblematic of a larger conflict in the family about what's "good for you."

Such discussion focuses attention on the construction of meaning and on the degree to which a literary text is fluid or fixed. The "finder" of this play had not put in this symbolic detail in any conscious way. However, she could see in retrospect that in making her decisions about how to shape the play—where to begin and end, what to juxtapose—she had recognized, without fully articulating, the patterns inherent in the situation itself.

As we hoped, students reported that the found play exercise gave them insight not only into literature but also into their own experience. One student, recording a conversation with an older relative which took place while they were raking leaves, thought he had written a simple play about male bonding when in fact, he had written about his sadness on his father's aging. When another student focused attention on a passing inquiry about the student's father (then severely crippled with arthritis), he began to see how much the whole interaction was overshadowed by his father's absence, the father's inability to do such simple things as rake leaves, and how the setting (the time of year, the falling leaves, and other details he had thought to include) underscored a loss he was feeling but had not yet articulated.

As their classmates responded to the plays, students began to relinquish the egocentric attitude that the author controls the text. At the same time, they discovered how many supposedly literary devices—the use of metaphors, repetition, silences, circular structures—are akin to their strategies for making experience intelligible. This helped them read with greater attention and begin to appreciate criticism.

The Play as Enactment: Performing the Found Play (Kim)

If creating the play as artifact allowed students to see how art can

determine as well as reflect what is significant in the world, then performing the plays in class allowed them to see how many different forms interpretation can take. This had two positive consequences: It made criticism seem less daunting, and it empowered a different segment of the class by facilitating less language-centered types of interpretation.

Drama is a particularly useful genre for demonstrating the naturalness and value of interpretive response because of its inherent levels of mediation. Words of a play are not sacrosanct but are “interpreted” by the casting, the staging, the pacing—modes of interpretation more easily enacted, though no less telling, than conventional academic criticism. The playwrights were asked whether their plays turned out in performance as they had envisioned them. Often casting, vocal tonality, expression, gestures, and timing shifted the intended meaning. For instance, the author of *Dinner Table Talk* could see how her play could be enacted humorously (for the comic predictability of the sibling rivalry, the parents’ helpless resignation, the audience’s benign identification with the scene) or more soberly (as a sociological inquiry into family breakdown).

Students were directed to consider not only the more obvious theatrical devices at work, but also the cultural context and how that affected their reception of the play. What was the effect of university students playing older or younger characters? How might people of different ages or economic classes react to the play? How do changes in the race or gender of given characters affect our sense of the power relationships at work? They could see, for instance, how, without changing a word of the text, casting women in a male locker room drama immediately changed the impact of the scene. Thus, they were prepared to accept that a work’s professed ideology and its implicit ideology can be at odds.

Gardner (1991) proposes that intelligence is not single but multiple, that students have disparate learning styles depending on the form of intelligence that dominates. Humans possess to varying degrees the following seven “intelligences”: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Gardner argues that many “who exhibit the canonical [scholastic] mind are credited with understanding, even when real understanding is limited or absent” while others “who are capable of exhibiting significant understanding appear deficient, simply because they cannot readily traffic in the commonly accepted coin to the educational realm” (p. 12–15). Our educational system increasingly favors language-centered learners. Gardner urges educators to teach to a variety of learning styles. An unanticipated side effect of the found play was the sense of community it built in the class. The quality and engagement in class discussion increased as types of learners who had been reluctant to participate felt their disparate learning styles validated. Bowen (1993) also found that the use of creative writing as a mode of critical inquiry levels the playing field and that student involvement in play production as well as in response leads to richer discussion of the critical issues raised by the primary text. It also increases awareness of both the techniques available to writers in a given genre and the effects these techniques create. Both Bowen and Gardner envision a topic as a room with many doors; students will enter it differently depending on their learning styles.

The Play and Criticism: Evaluation as Interpretation (Randi)

The play as artifact and the play as enactment are forms of interpretation and also incentives to a third kind of interpretation. In order to help students discover what and how they know intuitively and to use that knowledge and experience to enhance critical interpretation, I subsequently developed several evaluative techniques. The first two times we tried this exercise, we focused on authorial interpretation and the levels of mediation inherent in dramatic performance. In an effort to stress the importance of this kind of experiential exercise or performance-based learning, I graded each found play and provided a written assessment of how the play made meaning through the use of symbols, word choice, non-verbal dramatic devices, and so forth. For instance, one found play presented two roommates discussing an unspecified event taking place off stage that the characters ostensibly could see, but the audience could not. The result was a comic Theater of the Absurd. While the class could articulate why the play was funny, my interpretations not only provided a critical vocabulary to facilitate interpretation but also eased the transition from authorial intent and performance-based response to criticism.

In order to encourage students to take part in this type of criticism, I scheduled more time for in-class discussion of each play (7–8 minutes for each 2–3 minute play). To stress transferring oral criticism into critical writing, after hearing and contributing to class discussion, students were required to fill out a one-page written evaluation of two found plays. I assessed and graded this evaluation and returned it to the student playwrights. In addition, the playwrights were free to comment in class on the performance of their plays and were required to submit a brief evaluation of their play as performed, with particular attention to levels of mediation that resulted in unexpected interpretation. Consequently, all students received oral and written feedback from other students and the instructor, as well as experience in writing authorial, performance-based, and critical interpretation.

In my evaluation of *Dinner Table Talk*, I focused on how the title influences our interpretation of the play as an example of “talk” and lack of communication or genuine “conversation.” The students were comfortable naming the play as social realism which used both the telephone and the entire family situation symbolically. What was most satisfying for the students, as the playwright herself noted, was the interaction between shared personal experience as dramatically portrayed and the pleasure of articulating how this experience worked as a play. Bridges had been built between personal experience and authorial, performative, and critical interpretation, bridges that facilitated a sense of the personal value, limitations, and pleasure. Having had several interpretive experiences in relation to their own found play and the accessible and assessable plays of their peers, the students were able to apply these kinds of interpretations to the anthologies studied in the course.

Then for us came the process of interpreting what the project had achieved and how. When we repeat the project, we will stress the movement of the play from artifact, to enactment, to authorial and readerly interpretation. We will stress how both literature and criticism are ways of knowing and of creating knowledge.

What may resist articulation to some extent but nevertheless be enacted in class is the value of interpretive reading and writing. To some degree, the interpretation of a literary cultural artifact is used to provide justification for the value of a work. The text as literary artifact is a useful concept for reading in relation to historical and cultural concerns which must be recognized and used responsibly. But it must not be given priority over the pedagogical and personal value of learning about the nature of interpretation itself. Like particle and wave theories used to describe the nature of light, the nature of the text (and the nature of the text as knowledge) encompasses this basic act. Literary interpretation, then, not only operates within this epistemic system, but also provides us with the opportunity to foreground the nature of interpretation itself, to foreground the ways that we both know the world and create verbal knowledge. As the found play playwrights seemed to experience, interpretive reading and writing is not valuable for the purpose of dissection or even to interpret a work for its own sake. By becoming conscious of different types of interpretation as we work in relation to literature, we become conscious of how we limit ourselves with private, disconnected interpretations, how we can expand our ethical and cultural horizons by grappling with other interpretations, and why we should take pleasure in the human experience as it is enacted in both literature and interpretive reading and writing. ☺

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Subjectivity and Academic Discourse: Apples, Cupcakes, and Beige

Frances Jo Grossman

*Pain gives of its healing power
where we least expect it.*

Martin Heidegger

Paul Ricoeur writes, “What asks to be brought to language in symbols; but which never passes over completely into language, is always something powerful...” (1976, p. 63). This “something powerful” precipitated a search when I believed my writing held nothing ever to say again. Poet-philosopher Martin Heidegger describes poetry “as saying which, in preparing the sayable, simultaneously brings the unsayable as such into a world” (1971, p. 74). Heidegger places language in the context of disclosing and opening: “Language alone brings what is, as something that is, into the Open for the first time” (p. 73). I had not been aware of “something” needing to be brought into the Open. I was simply lost, and the world was colored gray.

I kept remembering Camus’ first line from *The Stranger*: “Mother died today. Or, maybe, yesterday; I can’t be sure” (1958, p. 563). And, I remember the coldness I felt not knowing exactly which day. That stranger ultimately gazed at “the dark spangled sky from a prison chamber with his heart open to the benign indifference to the universe” (p. 640). The stranger’s tale presented difficult questions for both me and a sophomore class. During my early college teaching, I fell in love with Existentialism and such phrases as Camus’ “condemned to freedom” (1966, p. 301), Sartre’s “existence precedes essence” (1966, p. 277), and Pascal’s “you must wager...which will you choose” (1966, p. 223). I still hold close those books, but my perspectives on responsibility, teaching, and choice have been tempered by sharp encounters with mortality.



My mother died on September 7th. I know the day, a holiday denoted to honor laborers, September’s first Monday. I remember the scene. That early morning I heard my name called by a stranger in a North Carolina mountain camp. Turning from the breakfast line, I set down the cold metal tray and followed the camp

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director. Something within me began a deep beating because the retreat had specified, "No telephones, except in emergency." The director pointed to a telephone in the kitchen. I listened, then sank into the chair brought by another stranger to whom I had waved, "Come, help." Help translate the words from my youngest daughter, calling long distance with her message, incomprehensible, yet the familiar language of sorrow—language of death.

There had been that other death—my brother, my blue-eyed twin. Seeing my tears on his last visit, he held my hand, "I didn't mean to hurt you." His wounding words, spoken moments earlier, had merely been the truth. My daughter's critical illness could no longer be hidden behind the mask I wore, pretending against such reality. Seeing my confusion, he gave a prescription to return from grief. "Be with people," he prompted, knowing my penchant for seeking refuge in the words of poets rather than in the presence of others.

And then he was gone. Outrageous humor, boots, tall brother. Gone. I cannot remember the day he died. Several seasons have turned, and although that Sunday morning scene is still vivid, I can never remember the date of that call. Alone in my bedroom, I was told of storms, icy curves, car destroyed, and a coroner's findings. Someone later offered, "Died instantly." Just a season to remember, a time preceding the South's early spring, about daffodil time. What now of my brother and my mother gone too? Both birthdays arrive in April, but neither is here to receive flowers or telephone calls. Time to mark this interim of floor sitting, reading poetry, Matthew Arnold's "The Scholar Gypsy" (1959), the title I have always transposed to "The Gypsy Scholar." Does it matter whether one is a gypsy scholar or a scholar gypsy? It quite likely matters. A colleague counsels, "Claim the voice you already know; you have no other time. What fear binds you rather than lets you assert your knowing?" My responses are feeble. I say, I don't have enough depth; I need another degree or a deeper understanding of Heidegger's *being* and Kierkegaard's *caritas* (as cited in Brown, 1955).



I had forgotten my exhortations to my students, "Write what you know." Truest writing emerges in stages not clearly defined yet somehow discernible. Writing develops through story; the extended narratives tell what happened. With familiar guidelines students choose sequences of temporal order or re-ordering the telling of the hour, the day, the event. Find the pictures, describe them, feel the scene. See the images in your mind's eye; re-create them with words as your resource.

And they write stories that beguile with their sincerity and bravery and alert me to dangers in their lives. The class applauds stories that capture what it is to be the only white kid, the only black kid, the one assigned a seat behind the bookcase where she could hear but barely see the teacher. We read of a high school senior's battle to extricate herself from gang membership in the Blades. She knew the inevitable confrontation must be set in a public place; the police would be called if anyone were cut or shot. And someone was shot, and the police did come. The summer ends. Students' papers mix graduation and college with funerals for friends, a suicide, and a drug-related street killing. Accessible,

extraordinarily vivid, the stories speak, "This is me—the self who writes."

Then, moving toward more formal discourse, the students blend personal narrative with critical reflection. Some students make this transition without strain, yet few retain their natural voice, wry humor, or assured sense of "I know wherefore I write."

Again, on the floor surrounded by the texts of Yeats, Eliot, and Arnold, all who have given the world a "scholar gypsy" (gypsy scholar?), I cannot write. Not just my story seems lost, but the autonomy and assurance that I earned in teaching term after term feel broken. I do not yet recognize this incertitude as a deep struggle to reclaim writing, my voice. Yet, my body knows that special sensitivity of entering the classroom to eager and not-so-eager students, where I live the role of teacher in the manner taught by Louis Agassiz (Shaler, 1957), or Joseph Conrad, or Maya Angelou, or Annie Dillard and all those who have guided our seeing.

But in this moment, my questions spiral darkly. What do I see? What do I have to say? Where is my story? My story is loss—loss and fear of being abandoned with no one to notice or care whether I ever write again.

Then I remember this gypsy—the scholar and the wonder of Arnold's story. I return to the old legend, the tale of the run-away scholar who learns of powers and ancient mysteries and never comes back, though he has promised to share his newly found secrets to fellow scholars. Yet, Arnold does not condemn the gypsy's failure to return; instead, he accepts the truant and makes a plea to "keep thy solitude" and "unconquerable hope." Arnold creates a poetic world where enchantment, timelessness, and immortality prevail.

Perpetually at play, the gifted scholar portrays one of many heroes in literature who pose questions about losing intuition or suppressing impulses. As literary critic, Arnold affirmed that the effect of literature on readers must be given serious consideration; he considered essential those "qualities which fortify readers" (Trilling, 1959, p. 589) to help them become more resolute in confronting a world of difficult change. In writings marked by concern for imagination, the validation of emotion, and fear of loss of the power to feel, Arnold, the poet, cared.

Now, the poet's caring restores me to what is already known—stories must be told; stories must be written. I guide myself as I guide reluctant students. "Begin with your own story. You can't get it wrong." It is then that I begin writing my stories:

Growing up in the western Pennsylvania's foothills, I watched the seasons turn in majestic autumns, long winters, with spring colors not seen until May. Mother, from Alabama, told us about early spring—February with daffodils blooming down "home." We never believed her. We thought, just another story of longing for the red dirt farm of her girlhood.

When no family in our neighborhood owned an automobile, buses were transportation to any "where." On Mother's Saturday trip downtown, she brought me a red apple from the open-air stand. I no

longer remember what she bought for my brothers and sisters:
 Encircling her, we scanned packages placed on the kitchen table.
 She brought me a single apple. I remember.

This fall, about a month after Labor Day, I began buying apples, bags and bags of apples.

In seventh grade I packed my lunch with Mother's lunch "stuff"—bologna, cold cellar apples, and chocolate cupcakes in store-bought packages of three. Mother cut open the packages of cakes, and we rewrapped them in packages of two in wax paper. We seventh graders, the silliest beings inhabiting our planet, pointed, and shrieked. I noticed other cupcakes in neat cellophane, vanilla squiggles across the top, filled with cream.

This fall, about a month after Labor Day, I began buying cellophane packages of chocolate cupcakes with vanilla squiggles and creamy filling. I sometimes bought three packages and ate them all at once.

Mother wore beige, beige blouses, sweaters, suits, shoes, and several coats. When I was seven, she chose brown velvet for my Christmas pageant dress. A long time ago I wore beige or tan until a day came when I realized that my entire wardrobe was some shade of brown. After that, I bought black, fuchsia, blues, burgundy, and gray and wear blue and black until this day.

This fall, about a month after Labor Day, I bought an old beige corduroy jacket (reversible, beige inside and out) at my favorite thrift store. I wore it every day.

By the end of January my sense of days and nights was confused. I'd awaken in a cold sweat wondering, "What time is it? What has happened?" And with a sharp blow, I would blur back to awareness—it is a new year. Then friends told me, "Eventually a sleep deficit takes its toll. You need to rest and release your mind from the burden of this wakeful watching." Maybe I was guarding the night universe so no more brothers or mothers would get lost. And then I wrote:

Apples, Cupcakes, and Beige

I began buying apples
 green, golden,
 granny apples,
 beautiful heart shaped,
 red delicious,
 little blue circles claiming
 prize quality

I bought more apples
adding to the bottom
refrigerator drawer already full
more green, more red, more gold
I did not eat any

I bought chocolate twinkies
seventh grade cupcakes
with cream filled centers
I bought three packages of two
and ate them all at once

I bought an ugly beige corduroy jacket
and wore it every day

and finally
I awoke in the middle of the night
screaming
I am not a dying frail old woman.

I have not yet burned the jacket
but the chocolate crusade is over
and I really like oranges and bananas

and today
I saw a red headed woodpecker
and a tiny little,
nondescript, as they say,
brown bird

and, I am not as afraid
of spring as I was.

And my friends cried with me, "We're glad you're back." I did not know I had gone away. Until I became conscious of my deep waking sleep of guarding the world, I had not noticed the calendar turning. It was daffodil time, the season of my brother's death. I did not know that my longing for his presence had been so strong that I would forget his formula for living and instead become the mother who joined her first son. Fragile little woman who had completed her life, gone now with no more April birthdays on earth.



Once our body's buried grief is recognizable in the light of language, it can be named. Phenomenologists differ on many issues but largely agree that human beings embody consciousness. Merleau-Ponty (1962) states, "My body knows

more of the world than I myself" (p. 276). In order to exist, the thoughts and visions that seek completion become embodied in words. "The naming of objects does not follow their recognition, but *is* this recognition itself" (1962, p. 207). Remy Kwant (1960) writes, "To name is to bring to light. As long as a thing is unnamed...it is submerged in a realm of obscurity. Through being named it emerges as a point of light in the world" (p. 38). Thus, grief moves from silence, to faint vision, to fragile wording, and then into a written—albeit fragmented—story. And story releases the "lost" writer back to the work of the world.

Writing, too, has been waiting, because I have abandoned several projects in the middle. Frank Kermode (1967), exquisite scholar-writer, tells us there are no beginnings. We always arrive in the "middest," to use his language (p. 39). We always come in the middle, but that is our beginning. Writers, professionals, and novices need reminders that we are always beginning and ending; each ending is a beginning, with each moment unlike any other.

Research demonstrating that the very act of composing is an epistemological tool (Bruner, 1987; Emig, 1977) confirms experience and returns us to primary questions. Does any single plane of language describe the encounter of subjective experience with objective existence? Metaphor promises illumination; empirical evidence provides data. Different domains of experience require different ways of seeing. The ambiguity of some experiences obliges us to understand them at multiple levels. And some individuals do not know that or they need reminders of simultaneous meanings. To select an interpretive strategy from such a multiplicity of choices holds potential confusion for any writer.

Yet, liberation for writers lies in the awareness that we need not follow an orientation that challenges our own integrity. We can remain on chosen ground. Herbert Fingarette (1963) articulates this concept:

The question is not how to introduce what is alien in spirit into any of these visions...[but], rather, to shift from one great vision to another so as to maximize our total vision, to deepen it, to build in many dimensions, to render what was opaque into that which is never transparent but increasingly translucent. (p. 235)

Writers live in a world so paradoxical that at the very moment of fixing words in print, they may become inwardly aware of changes which can only be addressed in retrospect. The more critical the writing, the more likely perception shifts, the more likely other perspectives will emerge, complementary or contradictory, though not essentially canceling the others. There is more to tell than I can ever say, and I know this even as I write. The challenge of "writing what you know" chooses a stance of informed naiveté, not burdened or burdening others by assertions of absolutes. Yet the challenge remains to stay open to sharper visions of experience. Kwant (1969) notes the paradox: "Strange as it may seem, our intellectual interpretations can sometimes make us blind to the original given" (p. 140). Bringing light to our questions rather than losing them in labyrinths of theory is essential to our goals.

Now, I again remember Camus (1955) and his last line from "The Myth of Sisyphus" that I have often repeated: "One must imagine Sisyphus with joy"

(p. 91). I do not know the exact day of my brother's leaving; I simply cannot remember. However, awake, I returned to teaching where my students are simultaneously serious and outrageously funny.

Despite Peter Elbow's (1991) freewriting and Gabriele Rico's (1991) clustering, at times students have trouble beginning. Possible responses: "Focus. Be present to your thinking. A writer's Now is the beginning and the ending." The writing surprises with the unexpected. The readings delight with recognition. Thoreau, Rodriguez, Welty, Walker, and all those beloved writers who cared to capture a reality so transitory that writing is the barest suggestion of what is. Most important, they cared not only to write for themselves but they cared enough to write for us, too.

I remember now other tasks, questions to research. How do personal stories connect to external contexts, to academic issues? I am not alone here. The very mentors who grounded my philosophical orientation offer more than an understanding of classroom dynamics; they defy any mandate that composition teaching is limited to traditional discourse, questioning not just the language of sophisticated formality but a writing stance of detachment, the impersonal, the lack of emotion (see Berthoff's concept "the consciousness of consciousness." 1981, p. 65). Expressive thinking and critical distinctions support the writer in merging objective and subjective knowing—although we have come to understand that such designations of knowing are not sufficient. James Moffett affirms the whole student, expressing concern that the absence of spiritual values seriously inhibits writing, that isolated writing in artificial contexts divorces writing from "all octaves of our being—physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual" (Brand & Graves, 1994, p. xi). The parade of scholars, theorists, and perhaps gypsies proceeds along with the ongoing debate of the permeable boundaries connected to teaching writing both personal and academic, both critical and creative (Gleason, 1993; Wyche-Smith & Rose, 1990). Within this multiplicity, some embrace a dialectic between the poles of the personal and the public, for although rhetorical traditions have separated narration from exposition, they can be considered an "interdynamic continuum" (Dipardo, 1990, p. 84). The theories of Paul Ricoeur (1980) and Jerome Bruner (1987) provide the scholarly basis for accepting narrative as a way of knowing.

Writing moves toward wholeness when students engage in the struggle to give passionate expression to their own issues. Racism, abuse, and family dilemmas evolve from personal stories to rhetorical situations appropriate in academic circles. Students generally do not think of themselves as writers, but if their work is read aloud and applauded, they can no longer deny that possibility. Other times when students hear each others' voices, the silence creates a space to name a tacit dimension that had existed prior to the writing but had not found expression. This is the mystery of intersubjectivity. By beginning with the real, the true, the issues emerge subterranean from the stories as each writer finds affirmation in, "As I see this, it is."

We can create an honest space for silence to move into words. We do this by being open to mystery, to silence, to the resonance of language—by not being afraid of unstructured assignments, not fearing the secret, unspoken questions of discovery. The students write: I am light skinned in a dark skinned family; my

parents are angry when I do not speak Chinese at home; my mother cries since my sister ran away. All true. All stories connected to solemn questions in a world of conflicts within and wars without.

And a body of scholars has emerged to challenge designating knowing to any single conscious cognitive realm, to explore ways of knowing previously under-studied or unstudied by composition theorists. Such ground is both brave and treacherous in the academy, bastion of quantifiable research, where emotion, intuition, inspiration, silence, and healing are likely to be met with disdain. If not lost in the academy, these topics are often perceived as threatening to more authentic research. Alice Brand (1989) researches from a cognitivist's perspective the territory of therapy, emotions, the psychology of writing. In his preface, Richard Graves (1990) names writing "spiritual agony and exhilaration," reflecting lived research in spirituality and silence, the interface between the rational and the mystical. Willing to face the impalpable, the inscrutable, these scholars bring together colleagues who research topics heretofore deemed inexplicable (Brand & Graves, 1994). Allowing the words "feelings" and "heart" is indeed "beyond the cognitive."

Knowing that all writing is ultimately time alone, with sometimes precarious boundaries, I still must write. So, too, students need to write of their losses or hidden searches until they are free again to pursue other issues. Whether we call such dim awareness affective barriers or writing blocks, when sleep, choices of food and clothing are governed by unconscious yearnings, all that we know of whole being and whole spirit tells us the body holds memories and understandings that must be spoken before the body-mind can move to other subjects. Students find validation for where they are in the story and confirmation that where they have been is a story well worth telling, well worth writing.

Ricoeur's (1976) philosophy of language encompasses an awareness of sensitive intersubjectivity. Because of our essential singularity in the world, we are beings of solitude, in the radical sense:

what is experienced by one person cannot be transferred whole as such and such experience to someone else. My experience cannot directly become your experience. Nevertheless, something is transferred from one sphere of life to another. This something is not the experience as experienced, but its meaning. Here is the miracle. The experience as experienced, as lived, remains private, but its sense, its meaning, becomes public. (pp. 15–16)

Ricoeur believes dialogical discourse appears as a way of overcoming the fundamental aloneness of each human being, and he names such communication "an enigma, even a wonder" (p. 15). Although writing brings complex issues different from those in speaking, the language events of writing and speaking are interrelated. Ricoeur expresses the paradox in universalizing the audience with a written text as opposed to face-to-face spoken dialogue, making written discourse "more spiritual" (p. 31) in the sense of moving beyond immediate personal encounter. The paradox suggests written dialogue includes the self-as-other in the writer's audience.

The gypsy told his fellow scholars that his knowledge needed a “heaven-sent moment” (Arnold, 1959, p. 610) in order to be imparted. He never told his secrets. We are earth-bound beings in body but we do know moments sent from heaven when our prisons of silence are broken into by the light of language. Some words, once written, lead to other travelers willing to journey with us, to the next story, to other beginnings. ☺

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A Plea for Re-Form: Aesthetics in the Writing Classroom

Anne Mullin

From the window of the plane I relish the geometric boldness: green squares, brown crescents, yellow rectangles striped with beige and bordered with this Tuesday's blue morning. I realize, though, that the farmer on his red dot of a tractor moving in the midst of one brown curve cannot see this grand design, this whole made up of complex relating forms. Nor can any of us on the plane see what he sees, the seeds being drilled into the furrows, the occasional scooting mole, the curious worm.

This momentary reflection serves as a metaphor for a concern that is fundamental, I think, to our teaching of writing: we and our students "see" the writing in different ways, from differing perspectives. Our constant involvement with a panoply of professional and student writing gives us an aerial vista. We view a particular essay as a whole with its parts in relationship. We have probably, consciously or not, developed our perspective through the aesthetic appreciation of form in the work we have read, done, dreamed, loved, hated.

I believe from experience that the more we help our students appreciate the aesthetics of form in writing, the more effective we become as writing teachers. Yet, I also believe that our training in teaching composition may not have prepared us explicitly to do this. We are likely to see our major function as helping students discover and express content, their ideas. We know that conventional usage provides a means for that end, and so we are concerned when unconventional forms or "errors" get in the way of those ideas. We have tended, I think, to link notions of form with notions of norms or standards, and to deal with them when we teach about editing and proofreading.

Our approach, I would argue, has not been so much wrong as limiting. I would further argue that we can enrich our repertoire of writing activities and responses when we teach form with approaches based on the principles of aesthetics. To do so, we needn't be intimidated, although we may well be fascinated, by discussions ranging across the centuries and involving myriad attempts to define form and its relationship to content or idea in works of art. We can trace positions taken by Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Burke, Kant, Bell, Beardsley and Langer vis à vis formal properties like smoothness, wholeness, freedom from imperfection, unity, and variety (Dickie, 1971). We can observe debates about whether art works "contain" specific properties, whether the formal properties or the conceptual content should be privileged, or whether a beholder determines art through aesthetic experience (Dziemidok, 1993; Kennick, 1966; Lind, 1992).

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Rather than becoming entangled in such debates, however, we may simply wish to recognize that traditional terminology such as “proportion” and “harmony” and “arrangement” can be useful for talk about writing, because such terms relate to considerations of organizational coherence, tension, and style. We may want to remind ourselves that aesthetics has much to do with pleasure, and indulge ourselves again in the pleasures we feel when the form and content of an artistic work mesh, as Coleridge (1962) aptly demonstrates:

The reader should be carried forward...by the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself. Like the motion of a serpent...at every step he pauses and half recedes, and from the retrogressive movement collects the force which carries him onward. (p.11)

We would probably agree with W.E. Kennick’s point (1963) that form and content are “neither exclusive nor exhaustive concepts” (p.194). Yet, as he notes, there are useful distinctions to be made between them: “the distinction between WHAT is said, depicted, presented, etc., and HOW it is said, depicted, presented, etc., connects with the distinction between form and content” (p.198).

We may be sensitive to literary form. Indeed, as one-time English majors and rhetoricians we can’t help but be. Our students, though, especially students in our freshman composition classes, may not have acquired the taste. We may very much want them to understand something about coherence, wholeness, variety in unity, or tension as desirable characteristics of writing; but we know we shall have tough sledding through such abstractions.

Ah, but the concepts don’t have to remain abstract. They can become concretely experienced as properties of art objects. We can bring students the campus art gallery to demonstrate the harmony of colors, the balance of mass, the detail within a unified shape as properties of paintings, sculptures, or other pieces on exhibit. Slides of art work can do the same. I like to invite a painter friend into my classes to illustrate how he confronts problems of unity, detail, center of interest, backgrounding and foregrounding, relevance, tone, mood, contrast, balance—all the elements of *his* process of “composing.”

Students can “see” and “feel” how the colors of mountains in a painting’s background are subdued versions of the bright tones of a building, the center of interest. They can follow paths of light that conduct a viewer through supporting details to the main event. They can perceive how one selected figure dominates while others are put in appropriate relationship. Or how, although some elements have been left out or obscured, viewers apprehend a sense of wholeness. We need not engage professional colleagues for such demonstrations. In our classes are photographers, potters, jewelry designers, musicians, and dancers who will share their experiences in creating various aesthetic forms in different media. Once students focus on forms and their relationships in masses of paint or bronze or movement or melody, they can, with explicit assistance, begin to appreciate texts as made up of similarly relating elements.

Such explicit assistance for me is a response heuristic based on Anthony Petrosky’s 1982 adaptation of David Bleich’s (1978) “subjective criticism.” Students and I use four categories for comments: Content, Affect/Associations,

Form, and Expectations. I emphasize the “form” category by asking in prompts, “What do you notice about patterns of language, about words and phrases that keep being repeated?” Students list these for each other when they give peer feedback, noting “You use questions a lot” or “Short sentences, like a child. So I believe this is what you remember” or “You use ‘the beach’ a lot. So I wonder what is it you think is so important?”

Student writers further sharpen their sense of form when they give self-responses. Admittedly, looking at the form of one’s own writing is hardest of all. The pull back into the writer mode with its concentration on making meaning, akin to the tractor-driving farmer’s absorption within his furrows, exerts a powerful force. But with practice, writers do achieve enough distance to spot certain patterns, state what feelings these evoke, and speculate on what their significance might be (Mullin, 1994). Students look at how their sentences and paragraphs are put together, whether long or short, questions or negations, or bursting at the seams with ideas.

These observations can also be represented tangibly by felt strips or by cuisinaire rods of equivalent or disparate lengths or by Tinker Toys. The representations can be arranged in parallel or contrary directions, in clusters containing similar or unequal numbers of strips, in configurations with conjoined segments or loosely dangling or separated pieces. It is eye-opening for students to see such concrete, non-verbal depictions of what aestheticians from Aristotle to the present mean by “arrangement.” Linda Hecker and Karen Klein (1994) offer still other ideas, such as choreographing essays to develop awareness of kinesthetic and spatial dimensions in language, in “The Write Moves.” Physically positioning and repositioning elements, seeing and feeling their effects give new meaning to the process of revision. Or students can sketch the shape of the essay to which they are responding; is it a straight-line path from Point A to Point B? A meander that connects several seemingly unrelated issues? A drawer with neat compartments? A pie composed of variously sized wedges? A trunkful of odd bits of fabric, outgrown boots, slats from a broken chair?

Once aware of how the formal aspects of written language may operate to trigger response in much the same way as do elements of a painting or tapestry or a symphony, we may more truly appreciate the relationships of form and content and their effect on audience. Cloudy or not, these are the depths into which I believe we and our students should plunge. Coleridge (1962) reminds us that connections between form and content are not always consciously perceived by the artist:

In every work of art there is a reconciliation [sic] of the external with the internal; the conscious is so impressed on the unconscious as to appear in it...He who combines the two is the man of genius; and for that reason he must partake of both. (p. 258)

Freud, of course, offered a deeper analysis of how perception of aesthetic pleasure derives from form and how form may trigger unconscious impulses. In *Creative Writers and Daydreaming* (1959) he wrote of the artist (in this case the writer) who

bribes us by the purely formal—that is, aesthetic—yield of pleasure which he offers us in the presentation of his phantasies [sic]....In my opinion, all the aesthetic pleasure which a creative writer affords us has the character of a fore-pleasure of this kind, and our actual enjoyment of an imaginative work proceeds from a liberation of tensions in our minds. (p. 153)

Unconscious responses may mingle with the conscious in the perceiver as well as in the creator of the form. As teachers, we may wish to disavow unconscious influences on our readings of student papers. But perhaps we will accept the notion more readily if we can appreciate how our response to form in, say, a piece of sculpture, may result from non-conscious associations to elicit feelings deep inside ourselves, some longing, some tension that needs to be released, some wish or inchoate memory.

When, for example, I stand in the Portland, Maine Museum of Art before Benjamin Akers' marble, *The Dead Pearl Diver*, my response is powerful: white, smooth, solid marble conveys, however improbably, a sense of limp flesh and wet netting. The formal shapes and surfaces produce in me a wish to touch them and experience their coolness and textures. They also evoke emotions, associations, further sensory reactions, and intellectual responses: awe at the artist's genius of design and expression, grief and longing to caress and revive that dead son, a whiff of kelp, and recollections of starfish collected during childhood summers. I reexperience delight at reading the description of this work in progress in Hawthorne's (1882) *Marble Faun*. I remember admiring the sculpture in Portland once before with my daughter. I sense intimations of an existence beyond dichotomies of death and life, matter and spirit, ephemera and eternity. The mix of sensory, emotional, and ideational responses is obviously evoked by elements of both form and content. But I also acknowledge the impact of my unconscious reading of the formal properties, which are then brought into conscious association to ideas, memories, or dreams.

Understanding the complexity with which I respond to an aesthetic object enables me to understand my response to students' texts and, in turn, to facilitate their peer responses. Ideas about tension and release, pain and pleasure, and openness to possibilities abound in Eco's *The Open Work* (1989) and in writings on fractal imagery, such as those by Short (1991), Voss (1988), and Gleick (1987). An appreciation of "fields of stimuli" and the dynamics of seeming randomness gives teachers grounds for dealing with papers we may find stimulating but are tempted to fault for lack of "coherence" or "adherence to an organizational plan" or "not meeting the expectations of the assignment." Artistic forms that balance on the brink of instability do evidence more "liveness" as the artist struggles for mastery over ideas and materials; the "safe" paper fails to raise our pulse rate. We can explore with students how to establish bounds for instability and chaos.

When asked, students will identify places in drafts where tensions or conflicts appear. The selected "places" may involve ideas or narrations of conflict, or they may be sentences that contradict each other, have an important word left out, or string themselves together with too many commas or no punctuation at all. Students point out such troublesome areas, often affective descriptors such

as “I was confused,” or “lost,” or bothered by “too much going on,” where the writing breaks down. Similarly, where the writing is devoid of intensity or liveness, responses suggest “it goes on too long” or “it moves too slowly.” Teachers can use such responses as opportunities to show how form and content interact.

For example, in response to a basic writer’s paper about leaving her home and family to come to the U.S., peer readers pinpointed three episodes where they felt “confused.” Yet, the class also highlighted these as points of greatest interest. Here are the three: “I always hated the smell of my father’s cigar. Now I miss it.” “It was a beautiful necklace. I was shocked. My sister and I had never got along.” “My mother and I held each other so tightly. After we broke apart and I ran onto the plane.”

When as a class group we focused on the formal patterns in each of these examples, we noticed how clauses and phrases push up against each other, cling together with commas or, as in the last sentence, separate abruptly. We could then see the joinings or partings not only as problems in punctuation but as points of tension, calling attention to possibilities for exploitation—which is why class interest was piqued. Readers asked the writer what it was about the cigar smell that she hated, when she realized she missed it, and why; they wanted to know lots more about the necklace, whether she accepted it as a gift, what she thought her sister had meant by it; they asked if she and her mother had embraced again after they “broke apart” once. The writer was able to add details to enrich and clarify those points of liveness.

On the other hand, one long paragraph about the train ride to the airport was questioned in ways that suggested a need for more variety and intensity. “Did anything happen on the train?” “Was it really a long way? Or did it just seem that way?” “Maybe it was all very noisy, with kids and everyone yelling, but you and your family were just sitting there quietly?” The writer decided to eliminate the whole section, which, she said, had described “just a long, boring three-hour trip on the train.”

This episode illustrates another benefit from a focus on form. Formal elements, as Langer (1974) notes, may be seen as both presentational (what is seen) and representational (what is meant) (p. 94). In the above examples, presentational aspects such as incongruous juxtapositions or unexpected divisions of phrases and clauses in some sentences may be interpreted as representations of ambivalence or of enforced separation. The presentation of the drawn-out paragraph describing the train ride suggests deferment of the inevitable good-byes once the train reached the airport. In other words, the form may express a meaning different from that purported by the words and expected syntax. As Derrida (1976) has alerted us, “gaps,” or “erasures,” or “brissures” can be read as “traces” which open a text to meanings that are “beyond it.” Similarly, Mina Shaughnessy (1974) pointed out that students’ “errors” often betray the strain of unfamiliar discourse patterns, mislearned or misapplied rules. She notes how a student “avoids crisp beginnings with real subjects,” uses empty filler words and passive voice, and “backs off in other ways, both syntactically and semantically...out of a tentativeness that is not of his making” (p. 86). By perceiving as presentational forms omitted words or non-parallel constructions

or sentence boundary problems, teachers can point writers to underlying significance that they may want to explore more fully and move into consciously represented content.

Admittedly, considerations of aesthetic form are not necessary in order for writing teachers to respond effectively to student papers. But such considerations lead me to different and far more interesting responses than I once gave. In taking up a set of student drafts, I ask myself about their formal properties. I ask how these formal elements of balance, or breaks in a line of development, or shifts in tense or person are acting in what Eco (1989) would call my “field of stimuli.” My perspective on my task shifts.

When students focus on the form as well as the content of their writing, they also shift perspectives. Their vision and their revision of their texts alter. They can break out of the trap of their ideas and play with arrangements, with effects. They, and we, can exchange vantage points and expectations. We can narrow our sights on formal convention and notice formal disruptions or broaden our view to range across contrasts and unities. We can sense the “what” and the “how” of a piece in harmony or in conflict. We can be on the ground, or circling aloft, or anywhere in between, experimenting with angles of vision. ☐

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Writing Ritual and the Cultural Unconscious: The Great Mother Archetype in the Composition Classroom

Cramer Cauthen

Re-vision and the Cultural Unconscious

When an archetypal motif is activated by experience in the social world, it is filled in with the contents present in the society. The form that the [motif] takes in any given culture, then, is the bridge between the universal and the historical; it is the point at which the archetype becomes particularized into its social manifestations. (Progoff, as cited in Rushing & Frenztz, 1991, p. 390)

Feminist scholars contest the hegemony of “objective reason” in Western epistemology, noting that this Apollonian tradition leads to hierarchical binary oppositions, inflexible judgments, and a separation of the knower and the known (Wilshire, 1989). Although feminist practices—most notably collaboration—have become increasingly prevalent in composition classes, lacking is fundamental change toward a feminist epistemology that welcomes affective and metaphoric ways of making knowledge as well as “logical” ones. One path for this change uses myth and archetype, which make and convey knowledge in intrinsically affective, metaphoric, and communal ways. Yet, Jungian archetypal theory has thus far had very little influence on feminist composition pedagogy. My attempt here is to ground Jung’s theories more fully within feminist composition practices, and, in particular, to demonstrate that the Great Mother archetype, given its frequency and extraordinary allusiveness, is an empowering and practical resource for teachers looking for alternatives to Apollonian, objectivist pedagogies.

Two common arguments arise against using Jungian archetypes in a feminist context. The first is an *ad hominem* protest against Jung’s social ideas about women, which seem to have reflected “the general prejudices of his time, his views often being no different than those of any other Swiss “burgher” (Samuels, 1985, p. 215). The second is that the archetypes are essentialized, ahistorical and apolitical, and thus unresponsive to the cultural needs of contemporary society.

We may, I think, safely dismiss the first argument, for although we cannot absolve Jung of his prejudices, we can read through them and can use in feminist inquiries those aspects of his theories that are appropriate. Thus psychologist Jean S. Bolen (1984) says that Jungian and feminist perspectives, when taken

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together, “provide binocular vision into the psychology of women” (p. 4).

We can find a response to the second argument in the work of rhetoricians Janice Rushing and Thomas Frenz (1991), who, like Bolen, advocate reading Jung in synthesis. Their central assertion is that “the external world of historical conditions and the internal world of psychological processes are separate, but interrelated, domains of human experience” (p. 386). Therefore, they postulate a psychic structure that they call “the cultural unconscious,” which is comprised of Jung’s collective archetypes “and the repressed contradictions from oppressive social formations” (p. 391). One of our tasks as writers and teachers is to identify these contradictions and work against the forces promulgating them. So accessing this cultural unconscious, learning an alternative history of human spirituality, and finding this history reflected within us, in our personal stories, in dreams, and in our relation to the natural world once seen as the body of the Great Mother, seems to me essential. The benefits of studying the cultural unconscious in the composition classroom lie in what Adrienne Rich (1979) called “writing as re-vision...the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new cultural direction” (p. 35).

Some of the most useful revisions of Jung’s theories appear in a 1985 collection edited by Estella Lauter and Carol S. Rupprecht, *Feminist Archetypal Theory*. In their introduction to the book, Lauter and Rupprecht summarize the feminist objections to the Platonic, ahistorical aspects of Jung’s theories. They then ask the central question of how the concept of archetype remains useful to feminist theory. Their answer is that archetype works when it is validated by women’s lived experiences:

We need a theory that will allow us to take seriously the patterns we find in women’s thoughts and images while preventing exaltation of any detected patterns. In such a theory the archetype cannot be defined as an image whose content is frozen but must be thought of as a process, a tendency to form and re-form images in relation to certain kinds of repeated experiences. (p. 16)

In search of these processes Lauter (1985) examined visualizations of the mother by women artists’ to see if there was a viable archetypal pattern in them. She noted that women artists prior to the twentieth century were almost wholly restricted by patriarchal conventions in their depictions of mother figures. But more recent artists have been relatively free “to explore the internal stresses of mothering in the modern world” (p. 53). This stresses what we might define as manifestations of the repressed contradictions in the cultural unconscious. Citing among others the highly varied works of Frida Kahlo, Remedios Varo, and Camille Billop, Lauter concluded that the Great Mother archetype may be both artistically and politically useful if properly contextualized, and that “[t]he concept of the archetype could be, in the hands of feminists, a way of recovering and revaluing women’s experiences, of discovering nodal points in women’s history” (p. 80). Adrienne Rich’s 1976 book, *Of Woman Born*, is a lengthy meditation on these “nodal points” and on the contradictions in our culture’s view of motherhood (Christ, 1980).

Composition students, I believe, can isolate similar ways in which the Great

Mother archetype is culturally manifested in their lives. These ways may be inspired by previous artistic or literary works, but they need not be. What is essential is to maintain a balance between the cultural and the archetypal. As Naomi Goldenberg (1979a) pointed out, we must not deny the necessity for myth, although we are free to reject any *particular manifestation*:

[W]hat binds us together as human beings is not, in fact, the *contents* of our religious and psychic imagery but rather the continual *process* of producing and reflecting on imagery. It is not necessary to cling to past documents of the imaginal process to maintain religious communities. Instead, we could build communities around the observing and sharing of the imaginal process alive in all of us. (p. 65)

The composition classroom is, of course, precisely where such communities can be built. The advantages of the Great Mother archetype in building them lies in the paradox of its ubiquity and its relative unfamiliarity: To many modern students, it would not be a “past document” and thus static and fetishized; but all students might be shown how to recognize it within their own imaginal processes.

Dualism, Difference, and Mythopoetic Language

Because we have separated humanity from nature, subject from object, values from analysis, knowledge from myth, and universities from the universe, it is enormously difficult for anyone but a poet or a mystic to understand what is going on in the holistic and mythopoeic [sic] thought of Ice Age humanity. (Thompson, as cited in Sjoo & Mor, 1991, p. 79)

The history and attributes of the Great Mother archetype may be a particularly valuable means of bringing feminist concerns into the classroom and using them newly to engage student writers. By studying the archetype, they can become poets and mystics and therefore begin to collapse the hierarchical binaries that Thompson described. The first step in doing so is simply to realize that the power of patriarchy is based in Western dualism; as Christ and Plaskow (1979) pointed out, any dualism immediately becomes a hierarchy and “a model for domination” (p. 5).

The Great Mother Goddess originally combined within herself the attributes of what we now call “good” and “evil”; these attributes were later separated into the defining characteristics of two opposing deities (Neumann, 1955, p. 12). It would be valuable for students to trace the beginnings of Western dualism to the transformation from one deity to two. But it is most important to see, as Rich (1979) did, that dualism begins in the subjugation of woman to man, which becomes a prototype for further oppression.

Studying the history of the Great Mother reveals these derivative oppressions as well as the aboriginal one. For instance, Pamela Berger (1985) showed repeatedly that the struggle in Europe between the Goddess religion and Christianity was as much a class struggle as a theological one, with the rural poor hanging

on to parts of the old beliefs despite the legal and financial power of the Church. Patriarchal dualism can also be found when we examine racism and European colonialism. Not only is there considerable evidence that the worship of the Great Mother began in Africa (Sjoo & Mor, 1991, pp. 21-32) but, as Neumann (1955) demonstrated, our “natural” fear of darkness, encoded later into racial prejudice, was unknown to goddess worshippers (p. 212).

Given the position that contemporary culture takes on the poor, people of color and women, and Earth itself, one of the most important opposites to collapse is that between the present and the past—that past rendered to us by historian Stone (1990) and Sjoo and Mor (1991). As these authors envisioned, the very idea of a goddess, a unifying cultural symbol, subsumes polar opposites and unites very different ideas and experiences. Ena Campbell (1982) noted a contemporary example of this unifying power of the Great Mother in her study of the Virgin of Guadalupe, who combines the Christian Virgin and Aztec earth goddess, Tonantsi. The Virgin of Guadalupe therefore mitigates class differences and “integrates the folk and mainstream cultures of Mexico” (p. 5). She has become a politically-motivating symbol of the entire Mexican people, as Campbell showed by citing the cry with which Miguel Hidalgo y Castilla began the revolution against Spain: “Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe and down with bad government!” (p. 9).

Students may find an analogous synthesis in their own lives; the very experience of motherhood, and, if we can but recall it, our infancy, discharges the illusion of dualism by the intermingling of mother and child. The best way to recall these experiences and to generate further meanings from the present and historical constructions of motherhood is through archetypal knowledge, which, Jung (1969) stated

leads to a restoration or *apocatastasis* of the lives of [a woman’s] ancestors, who now, through the bridge of the momentary individual, pass down into the generations of the future. An experience of this kind gives the individual a place and a meaning in the life of the generations, so that all unnecessary obstacles are cleared out of the way of the life-stream that is to flow through her. At the same time the individual is rescued from her isolation and restored to wholeness. All ritual preoccupation with archetypes ultimately has this aim and this result. (p. 188)

One of my hopes as a student of the Great Mother archetype and a teacher is that archetypal knowledge lead us to *enantiodramia*. In turn, *enantiodramia*, by which Jung meant that everything eventually becomes its opposite, returns us to the mythopoetic language that Nelle Morton (1979) characterized as one of the casualties of the patriarchal culture. Sjoo and Mor (1991), reading Robert Graves’ description in *The White Goddess* of the original, matrifocal language of poetry, describe it as nondualistic.

Paradox and ambiguity are not exorcised as “illogical demons,” but are felt and synthesized....Subjective and objective merge into an experience of cosmic oneness. Such a thought mode, of course, does

not build huge political and corporate empires like Rome or General Motors. For these purposes men have devised a language of logical precision, in which words can be used like knives to chop up one continuous life into mechanically unrelated parts; in which the visible—i.e., the intellectually possessible—dimension is stressed at the expense of the aural, tactile, affective, and mystic dimensions. (p. 41)

Practical Applications

To expect a mythopoetic language of college writers may seem implausible. However, various methods based on both Jungian and feminist practices provide a beginning. All these methods have in common Rich's (1979) concept of "re-vision."

Most initial exercises in description emphasize the visual dimension that Sjo and Mor (1991) noted. An exercise in affective description presents students with a number of symbols of the Great Mother: the moon, fire, all bodies of water, volcanoes, wells, blood, lions, sows, stones, mares, cats, cranes, apples, seeds, the cycle of the seasons (Starhawk, 1969, p. 263), chrysanthemums, shells, chalices, and roses (Spretnak, 1991). Students are asked to select particular symbols from the list and describe their feelings about them. The writers are able to find parallels among these feelings by keeping in mind the fact that the symbols— and the beings who observe them—are interdependent subjects within a larger unity.

I have adapted another beginning exercise from the work of Graves and Becker (1994) who use the river archetype. They begin by dealing with the physical source of the archetype, asking students to brainstorm a list of words describing the river near their college. The students brainstorm a list descriptive of "the inner...abstract" river, listen to music and poetry about rivers, and begin an extended text (pp. 58–59). This procedure works equally well with the mother archetype because a class full of students embodies a variety of attitudes toward mothering. For brainstorming, variations on this procedure might include particular images of the mother—possibly contrasting "traditional" representations with some of Lauter's (1985) examples—and examinations of the motherly aspects of the self.

Collaboration is also important in the feminist archetypal classroom; not only can it decenter individual authority, but it can also give rise to shared archetypal images. Goldenberg (1979b) described a women's dream workshop in which the dreamer first relates as much of her dream as she can remember. Then she closes her eyes and is questioned about it, extending the dream landscape spatially and/or imagining herself as other characters in her dream (p. 224).

This technique works well in the classroom, and demonstrates to students how the cultural unconscious as a whole can be revisioned in a concrete example of the combination of social and archetypal knowledge-making (Hillman, 1975). Another collaborative exercise asks students to revision an earlier religious or mythic text, paying particular attention to how binaries might be

avoided, and to write a reflection on how the process has involved them. Students might be advised here that many myths and religious stories have previously been revisioned, most notably the Eden myth, in which, as Spretnak (1991) pointed out, tree, serpent, and Eve herself have seen their original, celebratory meanings inverted (p. 140).

This last example raises the problem of student resistance, which can be minimized sometimes by using avatars of the Great Mother that do not directly challenge conventional Western belief. Jean Bolen's work (1984) is useful here, and is one of the most powerful ways for writing students to use the archetype to contemplate their own lives. Bolen used the qualities of Greek goddesses: the assertiveness of Hera, the creativity of Aphrodite, the wisdom of Athena, to examine both the interior and temporal lives of women. Furthermore, she encouraged her readers to use these goddesses as models, saying that, for instance, the continued practice of meditation can bring on the influence of Hestia, the most "spiritual" of the Olympian goddesses, or that excursions in the wilderness may evoke Artemis, the Huntress (pp. 31–32). She also warned that abdicating the choice of models allows "an instinctual or an archetypal pattern [to] take over" (p. 285). All told, she saw the knowledge of goddesses as a means of becoming more aware of our choices and our freedoms; writing students can use this knowledge to evaluate their previous decisions, to rewrite them, and to focus their future choices.

Another challenging project asks students to do in writing the same thing that Lauter (1985) described woman artists as doing, imaging the mother as numinous and frighteningly bound by society at the same time. A somewhat similar attempt could be made to examine, perhaps in consultation with Stone (1990), how the Great Mother has been (disastrously) revisioned in the past, and how she may yet be revisioned to redress the balance. This could inculcate the idea that revision is a continuing process.

It also seems important to study a particular goddess in depth. My focus for such a study would be Inanna, the Sumerian Queen of Heaven, because, as Sylvia Brinton Perera (1981) characterized her, she "provides a many-faceted symbolic image, a wholeness pattern, of the feminine beyond the merely maternal" (p. 16). Inanna is extraordinarily allusive; she is goddess of the harvest, of rain, of borders, of war, of sexual love; she is the evening star, healer and songwriter. Suitably, the main story focusing on her, "The Descent of Inanna" (Perera, 1981), is also extremely rich in symbolism.

As do the more familiar stories of Orpheus, and Demeter and Kore, Inanna's story is that of a journey into the world of the dead, and thus serves as "a paradigm for the life-enhancing descent into the abyss of the dark goddess and out again" (Perera, 1981, p. 13). My own interpretations use this paradigm for purposes of writerly introspection. Certainly we may see the myth of descent into the underworld as a metaphor not only for psychological insight and health, but for *any* difficult attempt at making knowledge, and, specifically, during the writing process. This process, in my experience and the experiences I have observed in my students, begins with straightforward expectations which are complicated by the gates (and gatekeepers) we must pass. There is confusion and pain in the process, but only when the seed dies can it grow.

Ritual and Writing

Teachers do not generally think of the composition classroom as a place for mythopoetic language and spirituality. Here again, however, the Great Mother archetype can act as an agent to synthesize apparent opposites. Sjoo and Mor (1991) affirm that for the women and men who knew the Great Mother even the most quotidian aspects of life were spiritual:

Religious rites were combined with industry. Women's religions were organic, a unity of daily life tasks and cosmic meaning. Among the women weavers of the matrifocal Navaho, for example, this is still so.

The women experience themselves as being directly inspired by the Great Spider Woman, the original weaver of the universe. They use no set patterns and feel no separation between art (sacred) and craft (secular, profane). (p. 51)

The craft of writing becomes energized by spirituality if we revision our ideas of subjectivity into a feminist archetypal model that does not separate the knower and the known, intellect and affect. The student who learns through the Great Mother archetype to observe herself and the external world as interdependent learns to observe clearly and lovingly, and to see even the simplest writing task as a path toward sacred knowledge. ☺

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Emotional Implication: Performing Within Emotional Gaps

Kristie Fleckenstein

Writing is a process in which an author cannot be divorced from a reader any more than he or she can be severed from a text: We are always writing something for someone. In addition, the *we* and the *someone* exist in a mutually defining relationship. Writers do not merely have readers; they also transact ecologically (Rosenblatt, 1978), with one inscribing the other. It is Buber's (1970) *I and Thou*, a fluid process of becoming in which the writer exists dynamically in relationship to an "other" by means of a "between" called the text world (LeFevre, 1987).

Dialectic is the term we use to describe this fusion of writer and reader at the heart of composing. But dialectic may be too limiting a concept. Authors transact with more than their readers. In the act of composing, they constitute not only their readers and their text worlds, but also themselves. A primary means for enacting this fluid performance is through emotional implication, a term I use to describe the process by which writers create emotional gaps that they expect readers to infuse with feelings, attitudes, intentions, and motives—that loose aggregate we call affect (Aylwin, 1985). The sense of shared presence occurs when readers perform the role of the emotionally implicated other invited by the gaps writers create in their text worlds (Barthes, 1967/1992, 1977/1992; Iser, 1974).

To gain a clearer sense of this performance, I became part of the efforts of a published author to create a science fiction short story. The author providing the data for this exploratory study was Gail Wickman, a freelancer who writes short stories, especially science fiction, children's stories, and poetry. As part of a description of my methodology, I wish to explain my relationship with Gail since it inevitably permeates my reading of her texts: protocol text and story text. Gail and I met six years ago when I was soliciting volunteers to serve as case study subjects for my dissertation. Gail, at that time a master's candidate at a large Mid-western university, volunteered because she was curious about all the jargon I used in my written solicitation. During the ensuing years, we have formed a close friendship that has extended over a 700-mile separation, 4 pregnancies (2 hers, 2 mine), innumerable protocols, and endless sessions responding to and discussing our writing, our children, and our lives.

We wandered almost casually into the joint venture of intermittently studying her writing and reading practices. Thus far, in addition to regular conversations and manuscript reviews, Gail has generated over 45 hours of

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talk-aloud protocols, recorded as she wrote journal entries, essays, poetry, and short stories. Together we have taped many hours of conversations discussing our composing practices and our evolving texts. Initially, I assumed a detached stance, believing I could use the protocols to understand the interaction of cognitive and affective processes in Gail's writing without the intrusion of myself as reader. Although the illusion of detachment lasted throughout my dissertation, my belief in that detachment disappeared midway. Now I view our multi-layered conversations as a process of mutual inscription, similar to that which we engage in as readers and writers. Thus, my insights resulting from my research grow out of my participatory stance. As friend, as critical reader, as inquirer, I am both participant and researcher, inscribed and inscriber. The protocol transcripts and my interpretations thus reflect our multi-dimensional flow of expectations and response, offering opportunities to examine the "authoring" of writers, readers, texts, and participant-researchers.

For this portion of our study, Gail provided 9 hours of think-aloud protocols in which she talked through her first and second drafts of a 3000-word science fiction short story called "The Brother." In addition to the protocols that recorded some of Gail's thoughts and reactions as she wrote "The Brother," Gail and I discussed her experiences in informal sessions sometimes many days after she completed her protocols. Finally, just as we discussed various permutations and combinations of elements as "The Brother" evolved, so did we review ideas and drafts for this article.

Briefly, Gail's story involves Kerek, a young man struggling against his assigned role within a culture dominated by a priest-led religion. Religious ceremonies culminate every generation in a ritual sacrifice of a young man designated as "The God Made Flesh." Kerek, son of the high priest and brother to the sacrificial victim, struggles to escape a marriage arranged by his father without endangering his position as the next high priest.

I transcribed Gail's protocols—five hours of drafting, four hours of revision—parsing the transcripts into clauses, identifying each clause as an ideational unit. As I analyzed those units, working between generated text and protocol text, I identified a contrast between an absence or gap in the story text—especially an emotional one—and the presence of a comment filling that gap in the protocol text.

Gail would create a scene or an interaction, select a name, or plot a sequence without articulating the affective matrix out of which all these elements evolved. Instead, she would leave spaces that she expected her readers to infuse with the same feelings that guided Gail's creation of that text world. As Gail described in one of our innumerable conversations about "The Brother": "I figure out what I want the reader to feel and try to create elements that invite that response."

I call this process of creating emotional spaces emotional implication. Through those gaps—an absence that elicits a presence—Gail engaged in a dialectic that mutually evoked her reader, her evolving text world, and, more significantly, herself. Let me explain in more detail this concept of emotional implication, then describe the ways in which such spaces allowed Gail to establish and maintain a three-part flow of becoming.

Emotional implication might be a more familiar concept if we examine it

from the angle of a reader, and, instead of implication, we talk of making inferences (Flood, 1981). Inferring is the act of supplying information not provided by the situation or text itself. An inference is a type of “inheritance” in which a single instance inherits all the characteristics of its class (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). For instance, no situation is fully fleshed, neither one we create cued by an author nor one we author ourselves. Rather, it is adumbrated, and we supply the lack through our inferences. Similarly, the powerful role of the absent signifier has been amply demonstrated by Lacan (1972/1987) in “The Seminar on the ‘Purloined Letter.’” Derrida (1976) in *Of Grammatology* also asserts the essential interplay of absence and presence in signification. What is not said exercises a greater power than what is said. Absence both constructs and deconstructs the presence of the text world.

Such inferential spaces are emotional as well as informational. Emotional implication occurs when the author implies without specifically delineating the emotional tonality (such as the intentions, motives, attitudes, and/or feelings) that gives rise to an experience or is engendered by one. The author does not tell, does not show; he or she expects. A variety of scholars—from Vygotsky (1962) and Bates (1979) to Bartlett (1932) and Aylwin (1985)—contend that language and thought are affectively based. Emotional implication draws on that affective foundation or matrix. When authors leave an emotional gap, they require us to perform emotionally, to inscribe responses, feelings, motives, and intentions. It is within these emotional spaces that Gail invites her readers, herself, and her text world to become.

Inscribing the Reader, Creating the Writer

Dialectic has been traditionally used to describe a reader-writer relationship; thus, I would first like to examine the ways in which Gail uses emotional implication to create her readers and her persona as author. According to Gail, the following example from the story text was designed to evoke emotions she believed readers possessed concerning particular gender interactions. In “The Brother,” an opening scene involves the protagonist, Kerek, repudiating his intended wife, Dayca. At one point Dayca falls to her knees, clasping Kerek’s legs. He kicks her away. The actual text of the short story describes the visual dynamics of the scene, but nowhere does the wording explicitly delineate Gail’s expectations of her reader’s responses.

However, as she creates this scene, Gail comments in her protocol text that the spatial arrangement of Kerek towering over Dayca will evoke a sense of pity in her readers: “Okay, so he’s standing before her. So she’s going to look up. That’s gonna make her pitiful looking.” Since in the story text Gail never uses the term “pitiful” or a synonym, she expects the reader to fill this emotional gap, to inscribe the presence of a particular emotion within the textual space.

As the scene continues through both dialogue and physical action, Kerek repeatedly rejects Dayca, who asserts she is pregnant with his child. Again, as Gail creates this cycle of assertion-rejection, she intersperses protocol comments articulating emotions that she expects her readers to inscribe as part of their text world experience. For instance, after designing Dayca’s plea for an early mar-

riage, Gail comments, first, "Kerek, being the asshole he is." Then she composes a description of Kerek's state as one of exultation at Dayca's imminent dishonor. The story text, however, does not include descriptions either of Kerek's character or of his state of mind. Thus, for the scene to function as an effective part of Gail's intended plot, the reader must fill the textual gaps with emotional inferences that Gail articulates only in her protocol comments.

Based on her protocol comments, then, Gail creates an emotional space that invites a particular kind of play with particular players. Gail designs a readerly presence as well as an emotional presence within the textual absence. This reader is one who will visualize a scene involving inequitable power lines between a man and a woman; it is a reader who can cast the woman as victim, sympathize with her, and condemn the man, perhaps even stigmatizing him with the epithet "asshole," "jerk," "fink," or "bastard," all terms Gail uses to describe Kerek in her protocols. At one point in her protocol comments, Gail responds to a situation she created involving Kerek by asking: "Is Kerek a bastard? He just wants to. Well, yeah he is. He is." For the text world to function as she has planned, Gail expects her readers to infuse the Kerek-Dayca interaction with the same emotional resonance, thus evoking their attitudes and feelings on gender relationships. If these expectations concerning emotional implication are not met, the reader-writer dialectic is disrupted, and the text world may careen out of the author's control.

If Gail inscribes her readers through her expectations regarding emotional implication, she is also inscribing herself. She does so in two ways. The first and most obvious way is through her very expectations of a reader's responses. She expects her "other" to react with a particular emotion because that is one Gail experiences in response to this evolving text world. During the initial confrontation between Kerek and Dayca, Gail creates a scene of unequal power. In doing so, she defines her own sense of equitable power lines between genders, then negates and unravels it. She expects her reader to view Dayca as pitiful (or later in the protocol Gail describes her as "sweet"), because that is how Gail initially sees her, thereby constituting through that revelation her sense of power in gender relationships. Thus, by the protocol comments reflecting her expectations of her reader's emotional responses, Gail also reveals the expectations that drive her own responses.

Second, Gail defines who she is by her unacknowledged emotional gaps, unacknowledged because they are accepted as already filled space. It is not what she comments on in her protocols that is so significant; it is what she does not comment on. Thus, just as gaps in the story text are important in tracing the presence of reader and emotion, so are gaps in the protocol text important for tracing the creation of authorial presence. And it is within these gaps that I, as the participant-researcher, enact my performance. For instance, because I am actively responding to absences in the protocol comments, I infer that Gail has automatically inscribed her presence within that textual absence, an absence that exists several levels below those that "exist" within her story text. In this "taken-for-granted" emotional space, I read her as unknowingly inscribing the emotional truths that define her life, the default options that guide her unconsciously. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this array of layered gaps is that of the father

in Gail's story text.

Within the short story, Kerek and Taret's father, the current high priest, appears as a physical presence only in the final sacrificial scene of the story. Yet he is a powerful and controlling, albeit absent, force in the story. For example, the father betroths Dayca to Kerek against Kerek's protests; the father raises Kerek to spy on the populace; the father chooses Taret to live and die as the god-made-flesh; the father perpetuates the status quo. The father is the main mover and shaker in the story, not Kerek who dominates physically. Yet nowhere in her protocol comments, barring a question in her first draft about elaborating on the father as a force of nature or evil, does Gail comment on responses she expects the characterization of the father to evoke. Commenting is unnecessary because these emotional gaps are automatically filled by a culturally conditioned presence. For instance, in Western liberal society husbands do not sacrifice their wives; fathers do not cut the heart out of their sons, either psychologically or physically; fathers do not impregnate their son's bride; nor choose as their son's bride a woman whom the father has impregnated. Therefore, any father who behaves as such is reprehensible and should be the subject of negative responses. No protocol or story text comment is necessary, and, within this unacknowledged and unfilled space, I "read" Gail as inscribing herself in terms of her truths about a father-child relationship. The same point can be made about the father's physical absence within the story: fathers in our culture are absent, but controlling forces (Luepnitz, 1988).

Inscribing the Text World, Creating the Writer

Finally, Gail defines and is defined by her evolving text world through the very emotional gaps she creates as a means to inscribe her reader. The characters acquire a life and force of their own, acting, then, as a force on Gail. Perhaps the best example of this is the change that occurs within Kerek during the course of the story. In the first scene, Gail attempts to establish Kerek as, in her words, "cruel" and "malicious," a "fink." The emotional gaps she creates are almost gleefully filled with protocol comments highlighting Kerek's less than admirable character. However, when Kerek begins to interact with his older brother, Taret, he starts slipping away from this negative representation.

Gail runs into difficulty when she tries to fill the emotional gaps caused by creating a close sibling relationship. As she constructs Kerek and Taret's interactions, she infuses Kerek with feelings and motivations she can identify positively with, particularly brother love. For instance, at one point Gail puzzles: "Kerek is stuck between Scylla and Charybdis but that doesn't mean he loves his brother any less; he's really torn up by the whole idea. So how's he going to react when his brother says, I'm glad I'm going to get to be in your wedding before I die."

Gradually, the change in Kerek, even while created by Gail, creates her as well. The search for motives and feelings to justify Kerek's reactions inscribes a tension in Gail that she is unable to resolve. By the end of the first draft, Gail admits that Kerek has "over time has gotten nicer," while Dayca has gotten "nasty." She asserted within her final drafting protocol that "there's no reason for this

change; I've got to figure other ways for this to make sense because I don't want to change it." In the process of creating a character who deeply loved a brother, Gail was unable to cast that same character as repudiating, without some cause, a female with whom he was physically intimate. She was in essence defined by this conflict within the text world. During a discussion session between drafts, Gail said that she discovered that she couldn't write about a "bastard." The very process of inscribing a character thus created a backlash that forced her to re-define who she was in this context.

Inscribing a Text, Creating More Text

So who creates whom? My answer resembles the progressive song, "This Is the House that Jack Built," so popular with small children: Presences are inscribed in the emotional gaps of a story text that writers create for readers to fill; the play within spaces boomerangs to create the writers who carry within themselves their own unacknowledged gaps. Like a progressive song, the performance tumbles forward. Writers and readers are inscribed even as they inscribe, and, on an equally important level, so are the participant-researchers who perform with them. The chain that links Poe, Lacan, Derrida, and Johnson (1978/1987) suggests the infinite regress of performance within gaps. No real end, no real beginning, just the ebb and flow of expectation and response, absence and presence. Within this flow, however, we are left with some interesting observations concerning the reader-writer-text world transaction.

First, reading and writing may be a product of emotional as well as ideational coherence. For instance, the very act of emotional implication seems to be built on the belief that an imagined reader will attempt to empathize with an author's vision of the text world, not an unexpected conclusion concerning poetic writing given the wealth of research on emotional involvement in aesthetic reading. Not only do proficient pleasure readers suspend disbelief, but they also actively attempt to identify emotionally with a text world. If the reading process goes awry—if, for instance, no empathy or no engagement occurs or if an unexpected perhaps inappropriate response takes control—we might wish to examine the territory of emotional gaps. How was an absence perceived, if at all? How was a presence infused? The construction (and the deconstruction) of a text world is an emotional as well as an intellectual endeavor; therefore, unexpected turns may be the result of affective factors. Burke (as cited in Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 1985) describes coherence as the arousing and fulfilling of desires. If the arousing and fulfilling of emotional expectations derails, a type of emotional incoherence could result, holding as much potential for disruption as ideational incoherence.

In the same vein, a writer may be the victim of her own emotional incoherence. For instance, if the trail of absences goes awry for the writer, as it does for Gail with Kerek and Dayca, perhaps the place to begin investigation is not with the concept of ideational coherence but with interpersonal coherence. The emotional relationship between reader, writer, and text, may have derailed, yielding a sense of fragmented meaning. Coherence, an unimpeded flow of expectation and response, is as much a product of the heart as it is of the head. Gail explained in a conversation following a protocol session that she "gets into an

emotion” and writes from that basis. However, she added that she couldn’t “think about the emotion [because] it interferes.” Such interference of the heart with the head, or the reverse, offers a new view of writer-based prose.

A second observation arising from studying emotional gaps involves socio-cultural factors. Inscribing a presence within an absence, as we do with emotional gaps, inevitably evokes patterns of socio-cultural practices. The site of an emotional absence and the infusion of an emotional “something” offers a fruitful area for examining cultural codes. A problem in both cultural studies and writing research is that cultural codes tend to be treated as blueprints or molds that exist prior to and determine individual development. But cultural codes, like linguistic codes, like schemata, are not deep structures but active processes traceable only in an action, such as the creation of meaning (Turner & Bruner, 1986). The process of filling an emotional gap is a point of emergent meaning and thus a moment during which we can “freeze” those cultural codes and examine their influence in inscribing identity: self, other, and text world. For instance, not all cultures would infuse a scene in which a woman kneels weeping at a man’s feet with negative emotions: pity and distress for the woman, condemnation and dislike for the man. Thus, the flow of implication and inference can be examined from the perspective of cultural influences.

My tentative conclusion on the basis of this study is that dialectic, especially reader-writer dialectic, is too restrictive, perhaps even inappropriate. Dialectic, with its implication of duality—even a mutually defining duality—is misleading. Gail constituted not only herself as a writer and perhaps even herself as other—the reader—but also her text world in a three-part relationship: an I and Thou and This. In addition, as the participant-researcher in this performance, I, too, was invited to inscribe myself as I inscribed Gail. What replayed itself through her protocols and our collaboration was a intricate play of evolving writer, reader, researcher, and text worlds as we performed within the space of emotional gaps. Identities merged, shifted, transformed, and reconstituted themselves throughout these instances of meaning-making. I’m not sure what term or metaphor best captures this fluid shift of absence and presence that yields so many inseparable identities. But regardless of the terminology, as we examine the emotional dimension of the writer-reader performance, we must also factor in the impinging plane of the text worlds, no small task. ☺

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Mental Imagery, Psychology, and Rhetoric: An Examination of Recurring Problems

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As writing specialists we often cross into psychology to inform our composing theories and practices. However, mental imagery in our field is not fully recognized as an area of inquiry from which to draw our theories. This is a mistake for those of us interested in enhancing our thinking about writing from the fullest possible range of disciplines. But this neglect is not surprising. Research into mental imagery is fraught with debate over its nature and the legitimacy of studying it. Indeed, by examining the parallels between the contemporary debate in psychology and the classical rhetorical debate surrounding the use of the mnemonic image, I show that the marginalizing of mental imagery in rhetorical theory and pedagogy is an old phenomenon.

In this article I look at the conceptual problems psychologists face as they describe, test, and apply mental imagery to show that we can trace similar problems in rhetorical history. I look at the contemporary debate between the pictorialists—those who believe mental images are like photographs in the mind—and the descriptionists—those who hold that mental images represent ideas or sentences in the mind (Finke, 1989; Pinker & Kosslyn, 1983; Tye, 1984).

Let me summarize the problems that psychologists discuss when they describe empirical difficulties in experimenting with mental imagery. Ronald Finke (1989) in *Principles of Mental Images* isolates what he sees as two basic problems in studying mental imagery. Finke says mental images are first, subjective and second, elusive. Their subjectivity comes from their idiosyncratic nature (different individuals will image a bird differently), and so researchers have difficulty testing mental images (they cannot insure that the images they are comparing are in fact comparable, which leads researchers to fear inaccurate results). The mental images are also elusive (one person's bird may last longer as a mental representation than the next person's, and when the subject tries to regain the bird image, she or he may find a different bird or no bird at all). These difficulties make imagery research, Finke says, controversial.

These concerns resemble the classical disagreement on the viability of mental imagery as a mnemonic device. This debate hinges on the utility of the *loci mnemonic*, an imagery-based mnemonic art consisting of a series of mental images an individual imposes on memory to enhance the recall of information. The individual forms unusual and violent images and stores them in a sequence of previously selected holding places in the mind. For example, to remember five

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names, a person might image each individual with various bruises in a separate room in the person's home. This strategy for layering images, called the *loci mnemonic*, was embraced by Cicero (1948) in *De Oratore* as a longstanding and highly regarded mnemonic, but was rejected by Quintilian (1922) in his *Institutio Oratoria* a century later. Though the loci strategy was taught and used consistently through the Middle Ages, Quintilian's attack on it made its presence circumspect. Quintilian's argument against the *loci mnemonic* included some of the same strictures that Finke pinpoints as inhibiting mental imagery research today. Although Quintilian provided a clear description and analysis of the imaging strategy, he declared it overly complicated and unteachable, saying, in fact, "My precepts... will be of a simpler kind" (p. 227). We are given to understand that since the loci method was difficult to recreate, to track, and, as Quintilian believed, to teach, its value was suspect. At best, it was appropriate for remembering long lists of names but otherwise an incumbrance. Indeed, because it relied on a solitary learner, the loci did not lend itself to the rote memorizing that Quintilian favored. In part, the medieval use of alphabet books, commonplace books listing prescribed images for each corresponding letter, reflected a retreat from independent images. This same disregard of the loci as unteachable was repeated by Geoffrey of Vinsauf (1971) in the early thirteenth century when he said, "Tully [Cicero] relies on a theory of exotic images, which it is well to remember; but he is teaching himself and is, as it were, the sole devotee of his subtle system which is of a subtlety unique to himself" (p. 105).

Quintilian (1922) also foreshadowed the debate on the nature of the image that is argued by the pictorialists and descriptionalists. As a descriptionalist, Quintilian believed that images were simply metaphoric representations of ideas and language which he did not believe could be adequately visualized. Quintilian, in analyzing the *loci mnemonic*, worried that words would be lost or confused as images replaced them in individuals' mind. He argued against using the loci strategy to help remember texts: "How can such an art grasp a whole series of connected words?" (p. 225). In fact, he saw the method as a hindrance to a rhetor: "Will not the flow of our speech inevitably be impeded by the double task imposed on our memory?" (p. 227). This double task is translating words into images and then retranslating them back into words. Quintilian feared that the rhetor would be unable to translate some words, a decidedly descriptionalist perspective. He also feared that the images when recalled later for linguistic transcription would not accurately match the words that triggered the image. Quintilian's position, which valued the verbal over the visual, ignored Cicero's contention that images were more vivid and more easily recalled than words.

Research methodologies today create difficulty for those examining mental imagery, by muddying research results and complicating discussions. When testing memory strategies, psychologists often investigate the classical directive to use bizarre or violent images to enhance recall (Rollins, 1989; Riefer, 1992). This particular component of the classical imagery mnemonic (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 1954) has been studied broadly in psychology, perhaps in part because it allows for a relatively straightforward empirical design that measures whether or not exotic images are recalled more easily than neutral images (Riefer, 1992). To establish this empirical design, researchers need only give

directions for storing images that differ in their description of the nature of the image (one group gets bizarre/violent, while the other does not). Researchers have tested this principle with uneven results (Richardson, 1987; Rollins, 1989). In memory research that examines the *loci mnemonic*, this empirical design also recurs, with often inconclusive or contradictory results.

Studying violent images may in itself be problematic in contemporary Western culture. If subjects used for these tests are desensitized to unusual images in the films they watch or the news they see, the classical prescription for those images may not be effective for them. I make this suggestion in part based on the work of John Richardson, a psychologist who questions the research methods used in memory work. In his 1987 critique “Social Class Limitations on the Efficacy of Imagery Mnemonic Instructions,” Richardson suggests that the socio-economic backgrounds of the typical research subjects (college students) skew the results of that research. These subjects, he argues, are empowered by social class and believe themselves capable of performing well on such tests, are empowered to learn, and consequently may use learned strategies more effectively than those from less privileged backgrounds. Richardson’s critique of memory testing can apply to the bizarreness tests. Would Riefer and Rouders’s study (1992) have yielded the same results had their subjects not been University of California-Irvine students? Richardson encourages us to doubt the ability to generalize from these and the results of other studies.

Major shifts in the treatment of the image, I believe, began in Western culture during the Middle Ages. We again see something of a fringe science when imagery was relegated to the status of memory enhancer to help Christians adhere to virtue and avoid vice (Carruthers, 1990; Yates, 1966). To claim that imagery was used during this extended period to teach illiterate people religious principles is an oversimplification, but a useful one. The architecture of the times used statuary extensively to represent virtue and condemn vice, especially in its cathedrals. Relics that were valued as talismans of goodness and power were housed in containers that recreated the artifact in some fashion. A fragment of St. Louis’s jaw, for example, is enclosed in a gold bust in Paris’s Cathedral of Notre Dame. Symbolizing the relic this way reminds viewers of its strength and its material wealth and of the value of living virtuously. The notion that illiteracy necessitated the iconography of the Christian faith may be partially responsible for the devaluing of the mental image in a literate culture. If words are preferred as efficient codes of thought and if images are tied to lower class illiterate cultures, then valuing images reveals social class and ignores literacy as a status symbol.

In contemporary thinking, mental imagery, even when discussed by those who support its validity, is often described in preliterate terms as well. For example, Finke (1990), in *Creative Imagery: Discoveries and Inventions in Visualization*, endorses using mental imagery as a “preinventive form,” an almost primitive term which Finke uses to identify “the products of combinational play of visualization” (p. 3), wherein individuals form, combine, and manipulate images in ways we might call a prose invention strategy. This view of the mental image is also reflected in Flower and Hayes’s (1984) “Images, Plans, and Prose,” in which non-verbal imagery is listed as a preconscious form of cognition along with structural relationships and procedural knowledge. In a chapter of his book

called "Imagery on the Bounds of Cognition," Mark Rollins (1989) tells us that "a theory of mental imagery can elucidate a range of issues from animal cognition to artistic creation" (p. 132). Though Rollins' statement does not intend to disparage mental imagery, I am struck by the marginalizing language he chooses. Mental imagery as a mode of thinking is something done by dogs and artists; medievally, thinking in images was something done by the uneducated, and only those on the fringe of our field seem to be studying or endorsing its use.

When we begin to look at where in composition studies the use of mental imagery is most often cited, we see continued neglect. Mental imagery is used by some cognitive psychologists in a range of applications: to solve problems, think creatively, and enhance memory; in psychotherapy mental imaging is used to reduce stress and combat phobias; and in athletic training to improve physical performance. Yet, currently mental imagery is not seriously considered by most mainstream composition theorists as a viable component of the process. It is an area of concern within NCTE's Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning (AEPL), established in large part by Alice Brand and Richard Graves. This concern is further endorsed in Brand and Grave's *Presence of Mind*, which includes essays on mental imagery. But apart from its inclusion in the work of AEPL, what little work is being done in mental imagery is in technical writing. Though this application represents a beginning, it unwittingly reinforces some of the same marginalizing of mnemonic imagery strategies of the ancient Roman rhetoricians. In an article, "Using Visual Mnemonics to Make Instructions Easier to Remember," in the *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, for instance, Hirst (1990) endorses visual mnemonics but does so in a way that contradicts both the principles of the classical *loci mnemonic* and contemporary psychological thinking. However, this treatment is in keeping with the spirit of medieval imagery.

Though Hirst cites the work of contemporary imagery psychologists and memory researchers, along with the classical mnemonic imagery strategy discussed in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, his strategies contradict these sources. Hirst instructs those who write technical instructions to use cartoon images to enhance their readers' recall of information. These cartoon images toy with the physical properties of objects, thereby exaggerating cartoons even more. For example, to create an image for tuning an engine, the cartoon might show a man drawn much smaller than a car engine handling an enormous and angry spark plug. (This same strategy was used by the Pentagon in the 1950s when it enlisted Will Eisner's talents to prepare comic books for soldiers to train them in auto mechanics.)

Hirst's use of mental imaging falls short of both classical and contemporary strategies. First, one essential element of the classical mnemonic is the idiosyncratic nature of the image; for the image to be recalled, persons storing the image must create their own image. According to the author of the *Rhetorica Ad Herennium* (1954):

Often in fact when we declare that one form resembles another, we fail to receive universal assent, because things seem different to different persons. The same is true with respect to images: one that

is well-defined to us appears relatively inconspicuous to others. Everybody, therefore, should in equipping himself with images suit his own convenience. (p. 223)

Hirst's treatment of images echoes the medieval creation of stock images and reinforces the historical marginalizing of the image.

Although Hirst's treatment of the image does not coincide with the classical mnemonic system, his modern, technical version does mimic a strategy used in constructing "emblem" books of the early Renaissance (Freeman, 1970; Lechner, 1962; Thompson, 1924). These books used a text to exemplify a woodcut that visually represented a virtue or vice, teaching a lesson both visually and verbally. Problems arose, however, in producing emblem books due to new and often faulty technology. The woodcuts that the emblematic texts were meant to gloss were difficult and expensive to produce; therefore, it became routine for printers to use whatever woodcut they had on hand. Rather than create text and image, authors of emblem books chose to write texts to match the available woodcuts. This practice resulted in a kind of seventeenth-century clip art, wherein often inappropriate images were used as a gloss on texts. The image became secondary to the text, functioning as an ornament rather than as the subject of the lesson and the means by which the lesson was effectively learned. This standardization of the image relegated it to a secondary status, mirroring again its position as less valuable than verbal representations.

Today, the difference between emblem books and mental imagery echoes the polarization between pictorialists and descriptionists by refocusing attention on their competing status. Which is predominant? Which has more validity, more integrity? Are mental images real pictures (Platonic embodiments of the thing itself) or are the pictures simply metaphors, constructed from visually powerful terms to articulate ideas? Can researchers develop tests that measure whether subjects are translating visual images into external pictures, or translating picture images into words, or combining these two operations in some way? Can we answer the philosophical question of which comes first, the image or the word? (Finke, 1989; Rollins, 1989).

In contemporary writing pedagogy we must be aware of the complexities implicit in the use of mental imagery and of the problematic history that surrounds it. But more important, we need to consider how mental imagery can help writer create texts, how mental imagery reinforces the way writers arrange texts, and most difficult perhaps, how readers of texts use mental imagery to enhance their understanding of, their enjoyment of, and their use of those texts. The ways in which we discuss mental imagery in our discipline should not further divide us into those who fit the mainstream and those who are peripheral to it.

And although we need to study the psychological processes in mental imagery, we need to remind ourselves that this work is not without limitations. Not only must we consider the cultural interferences Richardson warns us of, but we also need to be aware of the mechanization of the mental image. Prominent cognitive psychologist, Geoffrey Loftus (1989), alludes to these limitations when he says, "Computer simulations are seducing us away from doing real creative thinking in the behavioral sciences" (as cited in Finke, p. 145). Even today we

fall into the trap that beset the late emblem authors. Current psychological work in mental imagery constructs computer simulations. It attempts to pinpoint the relationship between mental and physical images and discusses them in technical vocabulary that mimics the mechanical. Even Kosslyn and Shwartz's (1977) model of mental images, which arises from a pictorialist view, describes mental images as having scanning, zooming, and rotating computer-like properties. Though we cannot deny this view of imaging, we must not be seduced by it, away from the creative thinking we need to make mental imagery a valuable part of composition theory and practice. ☐

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Images at the Heart of Things: The Writer's Unconscious Speaking

Hildy Miller

Years ago Janet Emig (1983) pointed out that we know little about the effect of writer's unconscious on their writing. She remarked: "There is no wisp or scent anywhere that composing is anything but a conscious and antiseptically efficient act. Nowhere in such an account is there acknowledgment that writing involves commerce with the unconscious self" (p. 48). I recall being struck by the need for such research when reading a story told by Fan Shen, a Chinese student new to the American classroom. A kind of extended reverie, her writing was an example of the concept of "yijing," which is "a creative process of inducing oneself, while reading a piece of literature or looking at a piece of art, to create mental pictures, in order to reach a unity of nature, the author, and the reader" (1989, pp. 463-464). Intrigued with her response to the assignment, I wondered then why we so seldom allow our students the wholeness of their intellectual processes in a way that could include such unconscious imagery. If, as Wallace Stevens once said, "A poem is at the heart of things," surely the mental images evoked in readers were also reflective, from a Jungian standpoint, of not only self—but soul. Such writing is potentially rich with meaning for students. Yet we rarely see it, as Moffett (1994) explains, "because writing to heal and to grow...is alien to universities" (p. 258). Despite several decades of research in writing, we still know so little about this cognitive area. Yet, in my research into the cognitive processes of writers, my students have discovered many compelling mental images which, like Fan Shen's, seem to be examples of the personal unconscious of writers speaking.

Beneath the usual concerns of purpose, audience, thesis, and structure, writers are really often preoccupied with issues far more reflective of self and soul. Their mental images are ones of trying to learn the lessons of life—why something has happened to them, what an event has meant, or how they can establish a sense of connection to others. Through the work of two writers who participated in a study of mental imagery in writing processes, I wish to illustrate some ways that the unconscious may contribute to the intellectual activity of writing.

Mental Images and the Unconscious

From a Jungian perspective, the personal unconscious is assumed to be as much a part of an individual as conscious awareness. The unconscious is not just

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a repository of repressed thought, like infantile tendencies that are better left undisturbed. Rather, it contains all the psychic material that has not yet reached consciousness, the “seeds of future conscious contents” (Jung, 1971, p. 71). Jung said: “The thought we shall think, the deed we shall do, even the fate that we shall lament tomorrow, all lie unconscious in our today” (1968, p. 279). Dreams and fantasy are its common modes of expression. But these narrative forms of discourse are really grounded in images, conceptualized in psychoanalysis as the “royal road” to the unconscious. Images often communicate core human concerns that underlie everyday reality. They deal, you might say, with issues of eternity, not time. “[A]n image presents a claim,” as psychologist James Hillman (1983) says, “—moral, erotic, intellectual, aesthetic—and demands a response” (p. 14). We may be accustomed to thinking of an image only as a passive pictorial representation rather than as an enlivened rhetorical vehicle. Yet, it is through image that the unconscious, or soul, is said to speak. As Hillman goes on to say:

The primary intention of this verbal work with image is the ‘recovery of soul in speech...which at the same time reveals the erotic and aesthetic aspect of images—that they captivate, charm, persuade, have a rhetorical effect on soul beyond their symbolic content. Many images represent motifs in our individual lives. (p. 15)

As Jung explains: “These images are balancing and compensating factors that correspond to the problems which life confronts us with in reality” (1970, p. 44). Yet, for all their psychic and rhetorical power, such images are not easy to translate into conscious endeavor. Many times, as the two cases that follow illustrate, their meaning can be best captured artistically or philosophically. They appear to drive writing from what I call the “metaphoric substrata” (Miller, 1994, p. 114), those figurative layers of symbols beneath our conscious awareness from which writers fashion abstract meaning.

Image psychologists (Klinger, 1978; Pope & Singer, 1978) who conduct naturalistic research on images in thought, say that we are constantly generating a steady stream of mental images. This stream forms the “flow of thought,” which is itself composed of bits and pieces of different mental representations of meaning. Images are ongoing, lively, and complex. They contain traces not only of actual outside visual stimuli that we deal with day-to-day but of our deeper personal concerns. Such a view of the mind runs counter to the kind of cognition embraced by the rationalist academy in which conscious, logical thought is emphasized. Yet, as Klinger (1987) and others have pointed out, we are not as “conscious” as we might expect. In his experimental work, he finds that most people are absorbed in the contents of their unconscious at least 25 percent of their waking hours. That is, we are immersed in states that are dream-like—preoccupied with images arising spontaneously in reverie.

In the processes of writers we still know little about the effect of images generated by the unconscious. Early on, Mandel (1980) proposed that much of the writing we do originates there, that “planning” is largely a process of responding to unconscious impulses. Flower and Hayes (1984) in their protocol studies noted at one point that beneath writers’ verbal articulation lies what they

“multiple representations” of meaning, including images, metaphors, and geometric patterns. More recently, studies have pointed to some specifics. Graves and Becker (1994) have explored the effects of using cultural archetypes to guide writing, and Mullin (1994) has discovered what she calls “traces” or eruptions of unconscious material that periodically disrupt texts. Fleckenstein (1994) has found that mental imagery coincides with writers’ fullest engagement with their texts. And Worley (1994) teaches her students imaging techniques that they can employ deliberately as a way of familiarizing themselves with what is an unrecognized and often unconscious part of writing.

In my own research on mental imagery (1993; 1994), I have found that it is an ongoing part of the thoughts of writers as they work. In a study of 148 writers, I assigned a writing task during which I interrupted them three times at approximately eleven to thirteen-minute intervals and asked them to fill out written thought-sample questionnaires. Such self-reports are based on standard measures of internal imagery (Anderson, 1981; Klinger, 1978; Sheehan, Ashton & White, 1983). Writers also indicated where in their texts they had been interrupted, so that I could compare the images in their thoughts with what they were actually writing at the moment. On a post-sample questionnaire, participants also reflected on their writing, particularly on any images that had been outstanding for them. Later, I spoke with twenty-nine students in extensive (1 1/2 hour) interviews to gather retrospective accounts of their imagistic activity and to understand them as writers generally—their history, attitudes, and habits.

Results of this study revealed that fully half the thoughts of writers contained some evidence of visual activity—far more than most composition specialists might suppose would be characteristic of responses to an abstract writing project. Mental images were ongoing for most writers, though they varied in intensity, clarity, and detail. Yet 41% of the images reported in written thought samples never actually appeared in the texts themselves. Therefore, thought processes rich with images are not necessarily reproduced in the actual writing that is underway. Furthermore, on post-sample questionnaires, 51.4 % of the time participants identified a controlling image as containing the essence of their main idea. Taken together, what these findings suggest is that there is a great deal of imagistic and unconscious mental activity that we know little about since this material is seldom captured in studies of writers’ cognitive processes (Brand, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1984). Yet, it is precisely here that a conjunction of images, emotions, motives, and private purposes may be found. Here the unconscious appears to affect writing in many ways, most often generating insights that reflect deeply personal issues of individual writers.

The Unconscious Speaking Through the Mental Imagery of Two Writers

Warren and Ethan, two of the writers who participated in the study, illustrate how issues arising from unconscious mental imagery are translated into conscious awareness, with Warren writing about his creativity and Ethan speculating philosophically. Even in response to a fairly bland writing prompt (Explain to me how you learn best), their thought processes appeared more driven by the unconscious

than previous research has indicated. Perhaps other students are also inscribing such psychic contents in their work without teachers knowing it.

Warren: Establishing Connections With Others

Warren, an architecture student, was strikingly preoccupied with images of his personal relationships. In fact, if images from the unconscious reveal themes that are current in an individual's life, family would be Warren's chief concern. In his case, interest in personal connection underlay much of his creative work in architecture and furniture design. For example, he told me that recently he had crafted a special table only one and a half feet high. The inspiration for the unusual design originated in a daydream he had about a picnic table for himself and his friends that he could set up on the slope of a hill. Unlike the sterile designs of so much of modern mass production, his vision of human connection infused the style of the piece with meaning. His interest in architecture was also rooted in a pivotal family experience, in which, as a teenager, he collaborated with his father in remodeling his bedroom. Warren was allowed to put forward his own ideas, and it was from this warmly recalled family project that his own design interests later developed.

Such underlying relational concerns extended also to writing. One of Warren's earliest memories was of talking his third grade friends into giving up recess to perform a play he had written. During our writing session, two of the thought samples revealed family images. In the first, he was interrupted in his text at a point at which he was explaining why he did not want to study foreign languages:

I know I almost feel guilty for this kind of an attitude. I must stress I'm not prejudiced. I just don't seem to have any interest in language. I guess I like to learn what seems to enlight [sic] me for my everyday interests. Here I am an architecture student and classes that I can tie relevance (STOP) to—that is exciting. It may seem ironic that an architecture student is not interested in foreign languages but that's the way I am!

In his written thought sample he reported:

Sure I bet your [sic] thinking that someone with an attitude toward foreign language like me and thinks he'll make a good architect is foolish. Don't get me wrong. I love foreign architectural variety. I just realize you can't do everything, and I've chosen not to try to fluently speak a foreign language.

As he explained in our interview, his playful defensiveness stemmed from mental images that he was seeing of his sister with whom he had a mock disagreement over the value of foreign cultures. As Warren put it, "She teases me about being a bigot—the kind of American the French don't like." Though the reference to family never entered the actual text, it was this personal connection that enlivened the thought for him. He cared what his sister thought as much as he did the readers of his writing sample.

During another interruption the thought of his grandfather seemed to generate a series of remembered images. In the text he wrote:

I'm motivated to draw so I can bless people around me with touching pictures (**STOP**). For example, I strongly desired to draw a picture of my family. And I strongly desire to draw a picture of my grandfather before he passed away.

At this moment he was actually seeing all the pictures of his grandfather that he wanted to draw—even specific scenes of him hiking in the woods. In this image he wanted to use art to connect to his grandfather, just as in the previous image he worried that his views on architecture would alienate his sister. For Warren, these ongoing images of family reflected a concern for using his creativity to express this love and care. In all his creative efforts, whether writing, architecture, or furniture design, his mental images seemed to reveal his underlying wish to create and sustain relationships with family.

Ethan: Exploring the Function of Faith

Ethan, an English and philosophy major, was focused on the tension between what he felt was demanded of him in academic writing and what he really wanted to say. Ideas that most concerned him were philosophical searches for meaning in human experience. Yet he recognized that much academic writing was concerned with simply conforming to convention. As he said: "After you've written for a couple of years, you get the forms—introduction, ideas, conclusion. That's all you can really do." But he found on reflection: "I always read a page and think, God, this is really boring." Still, he was seizing chances in which to explore safely the issues uppermost in his mind. The writing sample he produced for my study provided just such an opportunity.

Ethan was aware that he had been mulling over the question of the function of spiritual faith throughout the past year. In a medieval philosophy class, he had been exposed to the theoretical concept of faith, principally the idea that hope can sustain people through life's vicissitudes. But he questioned how deeply he "knew" what he had learned: "We take a test. I can write down such things as 'We only must believe in order to understand.' Or 'Reason inspires faith and faith inspires reason.' It all sounds so correct; the professor grades my test. I get an A. Thus I 'know' these things." In the writing sample for the study, he found himself unconsciously sifting through mental images of people he had encountered on his job—a search that ultimately enabled him to explore the concept of faith more fully. As an intern in a county attorney's office, he escorted families of murder victims to court and remained with them throughout their ordeal. At his first thought-sample interruption, he was mesmerized by these recollections. He said to me in our interview:

I didn't think of what I wanted to say—just thought of a woman in the courtroom her face, the suspect and the way he looked, impenetrable eyes—you want to get the feeling....Everyone's life has a life that extends far beyond them. How do they deal with a murder?

From the multiple images that surfaced he selected two cases to explore.

Later in the essay he was interrupted just as he began to expound on the function of faith:

To this I say, what is wrong with faith, what is wrong with believing in this greater justice, this one single concept that makes people live when there seems to be nothing to live for. I now (STOP) understand these lectures of these great men.

In both the written thought sample and in reflecting back during our interview, he explained that he again saw multiple images as he wrote this section. Not only did he visualize himself as an orator speaking to an imaginary audience and anticipating their response, but he also saw past conversations with people over similar issues on which he wished he had spoken his mind.

Ethan found this opportunity to write about something especially satisfying. He noted too that at other times, genuine commitment to an idea had led to much the same writing style. In a paper on Rupert Brooke, for instance, he recalled also saying in ringing oratorical fashion, "To this I say...." And on another occasion: "Yes, in a Henry Miller paper—same thing—I really believed in what I was trying to get across." He summed it up: "There are certain things that you just read and understand; then there are other things where you say, 'Yes, I know that!'" For Ethan, the mental images of the families of victims that had haunted him for a year finally found expression in an essay that enabled him to explore the philosophical issue of human resilience.

Writing as "Unconsciousness-Raising"

Annas Pratt (1985) has characterized the exploration of repressed feminine archetypes as "unconsciousness-raising," and this term might also aptly apply to the writing generated by the mental images of Warren and Ethan. In embracing the role of the unconscious in composing, some counterbalance is provided to the dominant rationalist view that emphasizes an impersonal reason (Johnson, 1987; Lloyd, 1984). This rationalist tradition and the discourse conventions that have arisen from it have a long rhetorical lineage (Brody, 1993). Yet, as Esther Harding (1971) has noted, academic thought devoid of spirit is likely to become increasingly sterile. The psyche or spirit that is repressed will, in turn, become more energized and compelled to seek expression elsewhere. Indeed, as Brand and Graves (1994) have said of our need to go beyond rationalist definitions of cognition: "The greatest need for growth in composition studies lies now in the ways we create meaning beyond what is currently considered acceptable knowledge" (p. 5). The heartfelt writing of Warren and Ethan suggests too a way in which students can develop themselves both as individuals and as writers. Rather than appearing as inappropriately confessional, this expression of the unconscious self manifests what Jung (1968) has called an individual's "reality in potentia" (p. 279). Some students, like Warren, may find their unconscious concerns covertly inspiring their writing. Others, like Ethan and Fan Shen, may produce new and energized shapes of discourse. Thus, "unconsciousness-raising" may lead to significant changes in the ways we describe cognition, the development of the writer's self, and the writing processes and products that emerge from it. ☺

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Mastery: Or, Where Does True Wisdom Lie?

Martha Goff Stoner

A story is told of a student who yearned for the wisdom of a master. Every morning the student climbed a mountain to reach her teacher who lived at the summit. When she arrived at his hut, she would ask him where she might find wisdom. Then she would stand, gazing at her teacher, waiting for his answer. Always the teacher remained silent, sitting on his cushion.

Each new day the student would climb the mountain, again hoping to receive an answer to her question. Each time she rephrased her question, believing that if she found the correct wording, the teacher would answer her. But every evening she returned home downcast.

Finally she decided this day would be her last climb. She would tell her teacher that she would visit him no more. But when she arrived at the hut, the teacher had gone. As the student turned to leave, her gaze rested upon the teacher's cushion. It occurred to her then that she might sit there, that she might see from his perspective. She walked to the opposite side of the hut and sat.

Days passed. The student forgot her home. She watched the light grow and recede. Day and night, night and day, she sat. A time came when the light and dark that she watched on the wall before her mingled and became one.

After a time, a seeker came to the hut. He had heard of the wise one who lived there. He bowed to the student sitting on the teacher's cushion, and asked, "Where does true wisdom lie?"

The student did not answer, but she knew.

Pearl

I wrote this fable in the tradition of a Zen teaching story to illuminate the nature of the journey toward wisdom. It is a West-meets-East fable. The student represents the methods typically used by the earnest seeker-of-wisdom in the traditions of the West. The teacher represents *the way* Zen philosophy teaches. Rightly experienced, the fable shows how these two ways, rather than opposing each other, create a whole. The lesson of the fable is not that West or East is better, but that in the West we tend to favor a single approach and that approach can undermine wisdom until we understand and include in our awareness insights such as those offered by Zen philosophy.

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In our Western system of formal education, we tend toward a mountain-climbing approach to wisdom. That is, we perceive the search as a journey toward a goal that is tangible, that can be held, as one might hold a crystal globe in the hand. What the East, as represented by Zen philosophy, has to offer the West is an awareness that wisdom comes not when the individual is busy climbing a mountain, aggressively focused on grasping the goal, but when the individual is quietly sitting, apparently doing nothing. In the West our training is never to sit down. We are encouraged to keep on trying, keep on climbing, eyes ever on the goal. But Zen philosophy teaches us to stop focusing on the goal, to stop climbing, to let go of trying and to sit down. Thus, in the fable, it is only when the student gives up her quest that wisdom arises.

What can it mean to suggest that by giving up, we gain? The Zen perspective on the goal-oriented search for wisdom was popularized for Westerners in the mid-1950s by the German philosopher Eugen Herrigel. In his slim volume, *Zen in the Art of Archery*, Herrigel (1971) described his experience of learning archery from a Zen master. Herrigel began to notice his preoccupation with hitting the center of the target. He became aware that he was determined and *effort-full* every time he pulled the bow string. The master called Herrigel's attention to this attitude:

“The right art,” cried the Master, “is aimless! The more obstinately you try to learn how to shoot the arrow for the sake of hitting the goal, the less you will succeed in the one and the further the other will recede. What stands in your way is that you have a much too willful will. You think that what you do not do yourself does not happen.”

“What must I do, then?” I asked thoughtfully.

“You must learn to wait properly,” [the master replied.] (p. 34)

But how can we wait *properly*? What is the quality of mind or attention that Zen offers as a replacement for the attitude of ceaseless striving so familiar to the West?

Waiting properly happens when we are fully aware in the present moment. Typically, our minds are occupied with thoughts of the past or plans for the future. In thinking about the past or the future, we miss what is happening in the present moment. Yet, all we ever truly have is the present. Consider, for example, a woman driving a country road, lost in thought. She may be thinking about a particularly difficult encounter with a co-worker or family member; those thoughts may shift to thoughts about her dinner plans; next she may consider a project that she has underway. The radio has been on all the while, but she has not been aware of it; then, a particularly resonant piece of music captures her attention. Perhaps the music is Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*. Now the driver feels a call, an emotional shift, as the deepening strains of the music awaken her. She begins to notice the scenery around her. She sees lush green fields and summer light touching the wheat. She becomes aware of an arch of reddening gold where the

wheat begins to ripen and merge with the sunlight. She breathes in the awe of the present moment. She forgets what came before and what will come after. She is no longer constrained by a consciousness that concerns itself with linear time. In that moment, she ceases trying to control and maneuver her life. Instead, she allows herself to flow with the journeying motion of the car and with the fields and sunlight as they envelop her. The haunting violins become the swelling wheat. She notices the mingling of worlds. In this condition of awareness, the woman's sense of herself shifts. No longer is she isolated, immersed in problems that require personal effort if they are to be solved. By losing awareness of her ego-based concerns, she experiences herself both as an individual who witnesses life around her and as a participant in a mysterious drama that is unfolding without her effort. She experiences her connection to the flow of life.

We have all experienced such moments. Such moments come to us because we have let go of the intention to make something happen—thus, the paradox suggested by the master of archery when he says, “You think that what you do not do yourself does not happen.” To wait *properly*, we must stop trying to make something happen; we must even stop waiting. We must simply *be*, with our awareness tuned to the multiplicity of life.

In the fable, the student is blocked from this state of being by her own perception—what Herrigel's master called a “too willful will.” The student *decides*. Deciding is an act of will, an exertion toward, a choosing to perceive in a certain way. The student decides that wisdom is of a certain order and that it requires a certain approach. Deciding this, she exists in a state of too willful will. Convinced of the validity of her own perception (lost in her thoughts as our driver of country roads was), the student misses what is around her. Missing what is around her, she also misses what is inside her. When she finally sits on her teacher's cushion, what is about her and what is inside her mingle—as did the wheat and the sunlight—and, thereby, wisdom emerges.

The student's too willful will is the mountain-climbing approach to wisdom. This approach reveals a habit of mind that the student should overcome. Fundamental to the student's approach is her belief that wisdom exists outside herself. The student assumes that she herself lacks wisdom and, therefore, that someone else must possess it. Her climb is the climb toward the one she believes can help her. Similarly, the student assumes that either she must find the right question in order to elicit the desired response from her teacher or she must fail in her search. Her belief in the teacher and her focus on the phrasing of her question reveal the student's tendency to think in an either/or fashion. Either I have wisdom or someone else does. Either my question is phrased correctly or it is phrased incorrectly. Either I must climb up the mountain or I must retreat. No room exists for a third possibility.

Because, as Rudolf Steiner (1984) put it, “consciousness determines events,” the student's decision that her world is one of opposites creates precisely such a world (p. 167). That the student inhabits a world of oppositions is evident in the alterations of light and dark, in the climbing up and the retreating downward, in the hope in the morning and in the despair at night. The student is female; the teacher is male. She sits on one side of the hut; he sits on the other. They face each other.

Such duality is familiar in the Western tradition. We need look no further than the Judaeo-Christian *Genesis* to discover its presence. As Joseph Campbell (1991) stated, “The trouble that began [in Eden] was the discovery of duality. That was the Fall” (p. 29). When Adam and Eve tasted the apple, they opened the door to a world of polar opposites. They became aware of male and female, of inside Eden and outside Eden, of good and evil. Their discovery ejected them from paradise. In paradise, humanity knew the union of opposites as well as such mutually exclusive states as non-differentiation and multi-differentiation at the same time. Paradise was the realm of infinite possibility. After the fall, earthly existence, by contrast, became the realm of opposition and of limitation. The pain of the fall is this separation from the paradise of familiarity with a universe in which all things are possible.

No longer one with all of creation, the human being is now an outsider—one who is not in synchrony, one who is separate. Now the individual does not recognize his or her essential kinship with that which is different. Instead, the Self says, “I am I. I am not You.” Divided from all that surrounds, we begin to fear the very context in which we live. This fear wells up in us and is projected on to the forces that seem to be most unlike ourselves. Self fears Other. Opposition becomes both our perception of how the world is and terrifying at the same time.

In this context, the Other becomes essentially repellent. When a dualistic mindset divides the universe into Self and Other; inside and outside; matter and energy; presence and absence; being and not being, the tendency is to go one step further and pit these apparently opposite forces against each other. The tendency of Western tradition to assume that opposites repel is apparent as early as Plato. In the *Phaedo*, Plato (1961) quotes Socrates as saying, “Opposites themselves do not admit one another” (p. 85). This “not admitting” of the opposite in the Western tradition often means defining the poles of any two opposing things as good or evil. A thing cannot be a thing in itself. Thus, if X is good, its opposite must necessarily be bad. If day is safe, night is frightening. If white is familiar, black is threatening. If male is powerful, female is weak. If life has value, death does not. If Eden is good, outside Eden (human beings, nature, the earth) is bad. So it is, writes Plato, that “opposite forms cannot face one another’s approach” (p. 85).

But isn’t duality our very nature? Because our bodies exist on a material, physical plane, we are invited to inhabit a dualistic consciousness. In order to move in the physical plane, we must experience boundaries, edges, sides, differences that are visible and felt. And because our physical senses teach us night and day, dark and light, cold and warm, sour and sweet, hard and dry, we cannot simply decide not to think dualistically. As Robert Frost (1969) put it, “Nature in her inmost self divides/ To trouble man with having to take sides” (p. 92).

However, while duality is inherent in our way of perceiving, it is not the nature of the universe. Quantum physics tells us that reality both is and is not a place of division. The table on which we write appears stable, formed, finite, and static, yet we know that it is composed of energetic forces in constant motion. As Danah Zohar (1990) writes in *The Quantum Self*, the new physics suggests that “reality at the everyday level on which we commonly experience it does

indeed consist of actual things like bodies and desks and chairs, while at the quantum level there exist no actual ‘things’ but rather *myriad possibilities* for countless actualities” (p. 31). What this implies is that division—boundaries, edges, separations between things—is not the whole picture. If the world as we perceive it with our eyes is not the whole picture, what is? Wrote Einstein, “There is no place in this new kind of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality (as cited in Capek, 1961, p. 319). In the field, matter or reality becomes indeterminate. The universe seems to be in constant flux, in a process of forming and unforming. Physicist David Bohm (1957) writes:

[T]he empirical evidence available thus far shows that nothing has been discovered which has a mode of being that remains eternally defined in any given way. Rather, every element, however fundamental it may seem to be, has always been found under suitable conditions to change even in its basic qualities, and to become something else. (p. 153)

True wisdom lies in being open to this unseen, flowing realm, the terrain of relationships, the place of interplay between forms, forces, and possibilities. There is no place here for an either/or consciousness. What is required is a both/and awareness. According to quantum physics, reality can neither be said to be stillness or motion, being or force, particle or wave, but it can be said to be both.

[A]ll being at the subatomic level can be described equally well either as solid particles, like so many minute billiard balls, or as waves, like undulations of the surface of the sea. Further, quantum physics goes on to tell us that neither description is really accurate on its own, that both the wavelike and the particle-like aspects of being must be considered when trying to understand the nature of things. (Zohar, 1990, p. 25)

The teacher in the fable calls the student’s attention to the true nature of wisdom by awakening her from her tendency to believe only what she perceives with her eyes. He does so not by lecturing to her, or even, after a time, by demonstrating through his own physical presence the example of the consciousness (sitting) that he is referring her to. Instead, he simply leaves. He presents the student with absence to consider. In so doing, the teacher withdraws from his position as the student’s opposite. He draws her awareness beyond the perceptions available to her through her physical senses and invites her into that realm of consciousness that she had believed to be permanently outside herself. When the student sits in the opposite place from her accustomed way of being, she experiences transformation. That transformation is apparent in the mingling of the light and the dark on the wall.

This mingling is the essence of wisdom, a condition in which multiplicity and nonjudgment prevail. It is a form of wisdom sometimes accessed through the arts. I recently saw a painting by Whistler in which this mingling of worlds was apparent. Whistler combined gray, white, blue, brown and black to depict a cold, misty scene of beach, water and sky. On the beach but somehow also in the water

and in the sky appeared a solitary figure of a person. This person seemed to be substantial and insubstantial at the same time—a figure that drifted in and out of the mist surrounding it. Whistler's painting did not represent reality in a dichotomous fashion. That is, I did not see a blue sky, distinct ocean waves, and a sandy beach. Rather, I saw a fluidity of colors mixing with each other in such a way that no single color could be said to exist in any part of the canvas. In the middle of this fluidity, a single human form *attempted* physical reality without quite succeeding.

The student's experience of wisdom at the end of the fable is precisely such an experience of wavering between and within alternate worlds. As she sits on the teacher's cushion, she becomes quiet. Becoming quiet, she is and is one with a universal energy, an experience that has come to her because she has shifted her perspective.

The mingling of worlds that the student experiences is characteristic of Zen, a philosophy in which all forces are held simultaneously. While the student sees contradictions and is disturbed by them, the master simply exists *with* the contradictions. Thus the ancient book of Chinese wisdom, the *Tao te Ching*, tells us:

The Master stays behind; that is why she is ahead. She is detached from all things; that is why she is one with them. Because she has let go of herself, she is perfectly fulfilled. (Mitchell, 1991, p. 7)

Mastery requires letting go of fixed forms and fixed ideas. As we let go, we become fluid. Becoming fluid, we become open to experiencing life as it is, rather than trying to make it become something we think it ought to be. In Hindu the sound "Aum" represents the universe in motion, the cyclical process of birth, being, dissolution, and renewal. When the Zen aspirant chants "Aum," it is an affirmation of this process and an acknowledgment that the answers to our questions lie within and about us in every moment. Writes Joseph Campbell (1991):

Now you are inward turned. The secret to having a spiritual life as you move in the world is to hear the AUM in all things all the time. If you do, everything is transformed. You no longer have to go anywhere to find your fulfillment and achievement and the treasure that you seek. It is here. It is everywhere. (p. 125) 🏯

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REVIEWS

O'Reilley, Mary Rose. 1993. *The Peaceable Classroom*.
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Boynton/Cook.

Zoe Keithley

Question: What do a bill of rights for students, a spiritual handbook for teachers, a manifesto for liberal education, a searing analysis of the war mentality of twentieth century America, and the book *The Peaceable Classroom* have in common?

Answer: Mary Rose O'Reilley: Catholic, Buddhist, Quaker, pacifist, professor of English at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Mary Rose O'Reilley harnesses the teaching of literature directly to a political position of pacifism, joining ranks with a select group often labeled educational mavericks—Ivan Illich, Ira Shor come to mind—who have pursued their passionate conviction that education should aggressively further the well-being of students, teachers, and community.

O'Reilley explains how she became yoked to the question, “Is it possible to teach English so that people stop killing each other?” (p. 20) proposed by a mentor some twenty years ago in graduate school—a question so surprising as to qualify as a koan.

The Peaceable Classroom sets forth an argument for the coming to the academy of what Martin Luther King, Jr. called “beloved community” (p. xvii). It uses an unorthodox, collage-like form that not only offers readers hands-on participation in the author’s own process, but mirrors the way a class or course, under a pedagogy of peaceful teaching and learning, might appear and proceed.

Look at this partial table of contents: Inner Peace Studies and the World of the Writing Teacher; “Exterminate the Brutes” and Other Notes Toward a Spirituality of Teaching; Silence and Slow time; The Retro War; The Sibyl in the Bottle. We are swimming in spirituality and poetry, in personal reflection, surprising opposites.

Listen to Peter Elbow, the Lewis-and-Clark of Voice, in the Foreword: “[T]his book constructs a wide-ranging exploration of teaching derived from her focus on *peaceableness* or *nonviolence*” (p. ix). “There is anything but easy optimism here.... But she gives courage about *having* the vision and letting teaching grow out of it....respecting the inner struggle and disappointment as part of the real life of a teacher” (p. xiii).

The book begins with the “pedagogy of the depressed” drawn from O'Reilley’s experiences with Special Learning/Behavior Disordered (SLBD) students at what she names the Black Hole School. The trip is not linear but

rather one “of stories, tropes, and images that nudge up against each other” (p. xvii), moving quietly among the years of formation and rumination, arriving at tentative positions, reaching forward. An uneven pedagogy of peace unfolds itself through an unexpected authorial intimacy. We see where academic concerns necessarily meet the roots of humanity, whether we like it or not.

“I wondered if we can discover the seeds of war in the interactions of the typical classroom or wherever our treasures happen to lie” (p. 22). O’Reilley introduces the systemic evidence of war in academia, its pervasiveness in policies and practices, in administration, in our teaching, and in our students’ ingrained attitudes and expectations.

But O’Reilley also reveals to us that counter-balancing light at the very heart of our studies, the awakening and energizing of our spiritual life. “This act of ‘entering in’ and the transformations of consciousness that accompany it is the essential moral transaction of the literature of the classroom,” O’Reilley tells us (p. 26). On these grounds she calls the teaching of literature a radical act. “I try each Monday to set up utopian communities of reflection, acceptance, and useful work” (p. 28). “We know... little about cooperation; more about the male than the female; the outer world than the inner; the rational than the intuitive; the machine than the garden” (pp. 34–35). She brings to her students a syllabus of listening to the texts. She stopped lecturing, she says, so that her students could hear each other, and the literature, and her.

O’Reilley goads—herself and us—into the radical change of peaceableness in the classroom, in all of academic life. “The arrangement of our classrooms should tell us, if we do not consciously know, what horizon we have set for the next generation” (p. 40).

She points out solid beginnings already made. “By incorporating such strategies as group process and freewriting, by defining the concept of voice... Macrorie, Elbow and their colleagues were laying out, I believe, a pedagogy of nonviolence” (pp. 38–39). She speaks of our work as teachers as being one of helping students to find a “sacred center,” that place at the crossroads of human experience, beyond that, to point out the wider circle of community within which each exists. “To find voice and to mediate voice in a circle of others is one of the central dialectics of the peaceable classroom,” O’Reilley holds (p.40).

The English classroom, she contends, is one place whose actual business is to help students access their spirits, their personal voices, as well as the voices of others. The finding of voice, O’Reilley holds to be a spiritual event of major proportion.

O’Reilley acknowledges *The Peaceable Classroom* is a compilation of previously published articles yoked to fresh material. This may explain a certain unevenness in the book: distinct changes in respiration, stylistic quarrels, a sense of patchwork. It might explain some overblown treatments, or the giving of depth but no breadth to a subject which the form of the book cannot accommodate adequately. The treatment of “maleness” and the roots of anti-feminism come to mind, an *opus maximus* in itself, let alone applied to the academy, or to the English classroom and its relationship to peace.

But whether you teach at a university or in a public school, if you don’t demand a perfect ride, and if your taste runs to astute observation, to books which

are frank and funny, rich in personal anecdote and literary attribution, from an author widely and deeply read in the humanities who integrates what she reads and practices what she preaches, you will want the adventuring, the mentoring, the friendship of *The Peaceable Classroom*. ☺

Brand, Alice G., and Richard L. Graves, Eds. 1994.
Presence of Mind: Writing and the Domain Beyond the Cognitive.
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Boynton/Cook.

Gerd Bräuer

Back in Germany I often thought about how to change the common way of introducing students to literature by just reading and discussing it from the teacher's point of view. As the years went by, I favored the link between storytelling, theater improvisation, and writing, believing in the necessity of interweaving the wisdom of the literary text with students' own experiences. What else can make learning more important than seeing knowledge in its deep connections to one's own life?

Departing from there and starting research on American writing pedagogy in 1992, I naturally came across works by Janet Emig, Peter Elbow, James Moffett, Gabriele Rico, and others. By reading books such as Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* (1973) and *Writing With Power* (1981), Moffett's *Active Voice* (1981), and Emig's *The Web of Meaning* (1977), later on Rico's *Pain and Possibilities* (1991) and again Moffett with *Coming on Center: English Education in Evolution* (1981)—especially his essays on writing and meditation—I finally introduced myself to *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi* (1969), *Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension: Symbolic Form in the Rhetoric of Silence* (1993) by George Kalamaras, and *Free Play: Improvisation in Life and Art* (1990) by Stephen Nachmanovitch. As I listened to Janet Emig at the 1993 NCTE Conference on Teaching English and the Language Arts in Portland, Oregon, honoring James Moffett's influence on English education, I finally found what I was searching for in my analysis of writing curricula in American grade schools, colleges, and universities: the teaching of writing as a tool for individual and institutional growth toward creative and collaborative learning.

When I talked to Moffett about my research, he mentioned a new book, *Presence of Mind: Writing and the Domain Beyond the Cognitive*, edited by Alice Brand and Richard Graves, quite worth reading, but not just for academic purposes, Moffett said. I got the book the same day, started reading it and soon after I knew this book was a most valuable discovery for my work. Later, after I had already put some of the teaching and writing methods from the book into practice—first just by myself, later with my classes—I began to realize the value of

the book for my personal growth.

Through *Presence of Mind: Writing and the Domain Beyond the Cognitive* (1994) I started to understand the complexity of the term, “writing as a mode of learning,” which here goes much further than Janet Emig’s initial definition in the essay of the same name (*The Web of Meaning*, 1983). Such learning is no longer limited merely to the conscious, but reaches “beyond the cognitive,” as the subtitle of the book signals. What that exactly means is not easily said in a few words. In one of the first meetings of the interest group “Beyond the Cognitive Domain,” the participants came up with 34 different terms (p. 1) for defining their area of attention, all heading somehow in a similar direction but no two of them having precisely the same meaning. I would like to focus on just three terms—writing and learning through *silence*, writing and *intuitive learning*, and writing and *therapeutic learning*—giving examples of how I have read the book and in what ways it has influenced me.

From time to time I get into an argument with my daughter. After a while our voices rise, joined by sharply gesticulating hands. I can almost see the air burning between us. When, in such moments, I step off the stage of overheated verbal combat, take my daughter’s head, and gently bury it under my arms, all of a sudden, I feel silence physically. It takes away pressure from both forehead and neck, clears my sight, and frees my chest of a heavy weight. I am now able to breath again.

When I was in a conflict with myself, wanting to write better, faster, more, I used to think writing comes through writing—a consideration which, I still believe, is not wrong, but one which does not always work. Silence (Part One of the book)—waiting, meditating, recentering myself—is another way of overcoming obstacles to a harmonious flow of human communication, whether it be on paper between my own voices, in the classroom between me and my students, or at home between my daughter and me. Peter Elbow’s restructuring of silence (p. 9), Donald Gallehr’s demand to “wait, and the writing will come” (p. 21), and Charles Suhor’s “pedagogy of silence” (p. 31) have helped me to discover the creative impact of the moments before, between, and after the act of writing.

Elbow writes: “I have a hunger for silence” and “In fact I’ve always been interested in people who don’t write or talk—the silent ones” (p. 10). In his collage he looks for a relationship between silence and voices, the ones in us and around us. What do they sound like in silence? He is concerned about what happens in the writer’s body when there is no writing. Are we able bodily to feel the energy of the voices we deal with? Does the meaning-making of something we wrote or wanted to write about stop? What response do we get from our felt sense about our writing process?

Years ago in a class on German poetry, I got stuck trying to get students to interpret a text. They didn’t see anything other than heavy, blurry metaphors in the poem and by complaining about the “stupidity” of the text they successfully aggravated the frustration. “What happens in the text?” I shouted over their ducked heads, frustrated myself, and without thinking about what I was actually saying. I promptly received a response telling me clearly that the subject of the discussion was poetry, not prose or drama, and, therefore, nobody understood me asking about the story line. I called myself stupid, impulsive, and incapable of

consistent thinking in literary genres. I was about to excuse myself to rearrange my material, when suddenly a young woman stood up and ambled across the classroom, transforming the heavy, blurry poetical metaphors into a light, transparent movement of a short improvisation. What we weren't able to see on paper by thinking in theoretical terms became instantly visible and emotionally understandable by the woman's physical performance.

Being under pressure and not thinking any longer about the boundaries between literary genres, I intuitively grasped for help by asking them to identify the dramatic action in the text from my most abiding interest—*theater*. Nevertheless, the step “from intuition to insight” (p. 67)—I want to call it here *intuitive learning*—was also taken by the young woman and, later on, by the students, who for the rest of the class, enthusiastically told me personal stories related to the subject of our initially so-badly-handled poem.

Wisdom of the Unconscious (Part Two) and Wisdom of the Body (Part Three), make up, to my understanding, the backbone of the book. The essays provided me insights into the psychic and physical links between intellect and emotion in the process of writing and learning. The authors, Anne Mullin, Richard Graves and Susan Becker, Elizabeth Holman, Sondra Perl, Karen Klein and Linda Hecker, and Trudelle Thomas make visible processes which we all experience every day, without, unfortunately, being aware of them: an intuitive learning, a learning through our senses. “The unconscious speaks in many voices,” so the introduction to Part Two refers one more time to Part One and its statements about silent voices. Here the voices come as traces in writing which lead and link to unconscious parts of our memories (pp. 41–52), or as personal metaphors, mysteries, and memories, deeply connected to the inexhaustible unconscious of the writer (pp. 53–64). In the book our inner voices are also shown as physically present: as felt sense (pp. 73–88), spatial kinesthetic (pp. 89–98), and acoustic sense (pp. 99–112). They enrich our writing when we are able to notice and understand their messages within a process of intuitive learning.

By working with Sondra Perl's guidelines for composing, my class and I followed the “writer's way of knowing” (p. 77). I taught Perl's model in contrast to a German program by Gert Ueding, a current-traditional rhetorician from the University in Tübingen. In his book, *Rhetorik des Schreibens* (Meisenheim: Verlag Anton, 1991), Ueding introduces a model where writing is understood as a tool for describing reality objectively. Ueding proposes step-by-step programs for writing in different nonfictional genres. One of his major concerns is “controlled writing” (p. 20), that is, tailoring one's exact language use to the rhetorical situation and audience. The central method Ueding relies on is *imitatio* (Cicero and Quintilian), the imitation of recognized authors through extensive reading and writing.

Here are a few statements about the differences my students experienced throughout the writing process: “With Perl I was concentrating on what I wanted to write after a few minutes”; “Confronted with Ueding's rule-canon I felt as if I were becoming smaller and smaller”; “When we did the breathing, it connected my thoughts and emotions”; “With Ueding I felt very comfortable and safe, because the stuff I was writing about didn't really belong to me. I just documented it”; “By reflecting on my own writing process as well as my feelings and thoughts,

writing for the first time became personally important"; "Ueding's model is good for class: clear structure and academic value. Perl's model is good for a therapy session: It opens up a lot you can't easily stop after the class is over."

Writing as *therapeutic learning*? While Ueding's model embodies strict rhetorical patterns to be followed for the purpose of correct writing by fulfilling stylistic rules, Perl's approach is directed toward the inner self of the writer. Hers are guidelines for an active, individual search for one's own voice as a human being. Understanding the history of rhetoric and its results as an institution, Ueding's writing becomes institutional, public, even though it might be intended for private use. Perl's writing is personal, though it would seem to aim for a larger audience. To my understanding, education needs to combine both ways, writing and learning within and beyond the cognitive, so that they may go hand in hand.

The essays by Hildy Miller, Kristie Fleckenstein, and Demetrice Worley in Part Four of the book, entitled *Images*, reminded me of Janet Emig's 1983 essay, "Hand, Eye, Brain: Some 'Basics' in the Writing Process" (*The Web of Meaning*), in which she quotes Jean-Paul Sartre describing his vision loss as the end of his career as a writer. Emig at that time searched for answers of how the eye participates in the writing process, focusing on the cognitive effort of the eye. The authors of Part Four of this book concentrate on the intuitive, the invisible of the visible like part one was on the silent voices: It is the recognition of images as something which fosters writing that interests Miller. For Fleckenstein it is the interplay between image and emotion that is a key for creating texts successfully. Worley bridges the gap between cognition and intuition: She suggests exercises for improving the ability to visualize for effective detail—writing and problem-solving.

Coming from a rather rationally oriented German culture and education, I found that the essays by Brand and Teich on Emotions (Part Five) in the writing classroom were beneficial to my understanding of the theoretical and practical connection between intuition and cognition. In these essays, sensual experience is characterized as important in the process of unfolding personality and establishing a system of human values within society. Learning through writing "beyond the cognitive domain" is described as a matter of individual *and* of social learning. Living as I do in a society that overrates science and technology, I found Alice Brand's conclusion about the system of human values personally exciting: "The most important human values are emotional, not intellectual" (p. 178). Unfortunately, I cannot claim to have already learned how to live this wisdom. To know something and to be able to put it into practice are two different shoes. Writing about this conflict might be a chance to get used to the new shoe.

The Open Door (Part Six) led me to the historical dimension of writing: narrating, searching, recalling, listening, viewing, and imagining. The process of composing integrates past, present, and future, even though we as writers might sometimes not be aware of it. Our autobiography is part of history; our daily life stories embody the present; hopes, dreams, and fears are our vision of the future. To discover their often hidden richness, it needs techniques tapping into the unconscious: Donald Murray introduces story writing as writing personal history;

personal writing as healing is the focus by Sandra Burkett and Gabriele Rico; Richard Murphy Jr. recounts the relationships between teacher and student needed to hold open the door toward our past, present, and future.

The progression of the parts in *Presence of Mind*, evocative of the movement of one's personal growth, almost persuades me to believe in the existence of a "right way" to reach the root of creativity: Silence, Wisdom of the Unconscious, Wisdom of the Body, Images, Emotions, and The Open Door. Nevertheless, no single essay within the parts listed above made me feel able to count on anything more than myself. To believe in oneself (as a writer) here means to trust oneself as a whole person: one's body, experience, and language. From there one can go on as far as one wishes. "What a miracle," Peter Elbow exclaims, "we can write anything...we can say anything. Language doesn't fail" (p. 9). For the different paths of this journey the articles do not provide recipes, but rather suggestions, examples, experience, tips for remembering—all in all, a space for personal growth. ☺

Humphrey, Nicholas, 1992. *A History of the Mind: Evolution and the Birth of Consciousness*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Larry Anderson

Nicholas Humphrey sets no small task for himself; he states boldly in his preface that this book is "an evolutionary history of how sensory consciousness has come into the world and what it is doing there....It sets out not just to define the problem of consciousness but to solve it" (p. 17). Humphrey succeeds by the end of book in solving a theoretical problem. But what we are unaware of at the start is that he will continually narrow the scope of his key terms, so that by the end we are not sure that what he has solved is the problem of consciousness. I think of someone who is about to explain the internal combustion engine, but ends up actually just explaining the carburetor because in the process he defines the carburetor as the place where it all begins. We certainly learn something about the internal combustion engine, but not exactly what we at first thought we would.

The most fascinating part of the book is its overview of evolutionary history from the origin of the cosmos to the present. Humphrey is careful to begin at the beginning, imagining the time when there were no sentient creatures and how they—our ancestors—came to be. He takes the long view to avoid making any assumptions about either the emergence of mind and consciousness or about objective physical reality. He spends a little time criticizing other theorists for making just such assumptions but quickly moves into evolution. As organisms developed, their membranes became increasingly important in that they eventually created the distinction between "me" and "not-me." These boundaries, though, were also frontiers at which the outside world made an impact on the organism.

Over time there would have developed (so Humphrey's argument goes) organisms that could select among various influences those that were "good" and those that were "bad"; these were early sensations. As the sensitivity of this frontier increased, the organism could make progressively selective and specific responses. This brings us to Humphrey's definition of mind: the faculty of organisms that stored "action-based representations of the effects of environmental stimulation on their own bodies" (p. 42). That is, the stimulation that evoked an action has become meaningful; the mind developed in response to the "phenomenology of sensory experiences" (p. 42). Due to these representations we have a clear distinction between "that which is happening to me" and "that which is happening out there."

In this distinction we have the difference between sensation and perception; for Humphrey, the distinction rests on the act of interpretation. For instance, organisms during the first stage of evolution constantly processed input through their sense organs, which allowed them to create a subjective presence. But in order to create "intentional objects of cognition and objective knowledge of the external world" (p. 44), a new style of processing had to evolve, a style that depended on the organism interpreting the sensation as representing something "out there." As an illustration, Humphrey describes a scene in which he is sitting at his desk writing. He is being bombarded by stimuli: approaching thunder, sights and smells from the garden outside the window, an ant crawling up his leg. At one level, he processes these stimuli as sensations that affect his private world; he likes some and dislikes others. But at another level, he interprets these stimuli as signs that signify the state of the external world. "At the second level," Humphrey states, "I am the spectator of a public world (not my world now) of independent physical phenomena" (p. 45).

With this phenomenological background, Humphrey illustrates the nature of sensory experience using the sense of smell, drawing on Thomas Reid's *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (1785). With Reid's help, he points out that when we smell a rose, sensation answers the question "What is happening to me?" Perception answers the question, "What is happening out there?" The crucial determination to be made is whether sensation and perception exist in a serial or parallel relationship. He goes on to argue, convincingly, that the relationship is a parallel one. But he first bemoans the nineteenth century's obsession with perception to the exclusion of sensation, the effects of which we feel to this day. In the process he applauds the Romantic poets (Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron) and the Impressionistic painters (Van Gogh, Monet) for turning away from perception and focusing on sensation.

He returns to his argument, then, by pointing out that if he can show that it's possible to "decouple" sensation and perception, then that would tell us if they were serial or parallel. He accomplishes this by drawing on experimental and clinical evidence as well as thought experiments based on questions like, "What would happen if you could wear glasses that reversed all colors?" and "What would happen if you could wear glasses that inverted everything?" Having arrived at this juncture, we seem poised on the brink of reaching Humphrey's definition of the term "consciousness." But he isn't ready to deliver yet.

He anticipates potential criticism of his argument at this point on the basis

of imagery. He recognizes that we can create images of sensations (visual ones being the easiest), which pose a problem for his theory: How do we know if a sensation is actual or imagined? He provides an answer to this question. But it rests squarely on evolutionary history.

Having addressed this potential criticism, he defines what it means to be conscious: “to have affect-laden mental representations of something happening here and now to me” (p. 120). He immediately recognizes the narrowness of this definition, for it says nothing about other states of mind that we obviously have but that also obviously do not arise from the stimulation of our sense organs. This narrows his territory considerably; in effect, he removes the concept of consciousness from discussions of cognition. He apparently feels that the latter has been explored all too thoroughly by those psychologists who have focused on perception. Humphrey separates perception from sensation, having shown their relationship to be parallel rather than serial. So what we end up with is a theory of sensations, with an argument for the centrality of affect in our lives—our subjectivities—since sensations are affect-laden. In other words, Humphrey revises Descartes dictum: “*I feel, therefore I am*” (p. 115).

At this point, his argument takes a bold turn. If we agree that sensations require some state of control over the responses evoked by outside stimulation, then perhaps it is we who control our sensations. Humphrey proposes that we are the authors of the sensations we typically believe “happen to” us. In order to argue this, he claims that the “I” experiences two different durations of time, which he calls physical and subjective. For example, imagine persons climbing a spiral staircase. As they climb, they naturally feel that they are continually advancing; yet on a spiral staircase half the time they are actually retreating. For Humphrey, a unit of physical time (the time needed to reach the top of the staircase) contains an entire sequence of units of subjective time (the time needed to raise one foot and place it on the next tread). Consequently, “what constitutes the conscious present is largely the immediate sensory *afterglow* of stimuli that have just passed by—the dying-away activity in reverberating sensory loops” (p. 189). It is from the reverberating loop that Humphrey claims we actually send outward the instructions for the sensations we want. He summarizes it: “What it is for someone to feel a particular sensation is just for him to issue whatever ‘instructions’ are required to bring about the appropriate activity” (p. 192). The weakness in this argument is Humphrey’s assumption of such a thing as physical times, as opposed to subjective time. It could be argued that all time is subjective time because time is always processed mentally.

And so we arrive at the solution he promised to the “problem of consciousness” (p. 17). In his preface he warned us to not expect too much: “Could the solution to the problem of consciousness be boring?” He returns to this question at the end, defending the critique I made earlier about narrowing the scope of what we take to be the original topic. After all, Humphrey seems to imply, ‘the problem is not as complicated as we all thought! Of course, the way he has framed the problem, the answer is a bit boring, not for what he says but for what he does not say. He knows he is leaving some readers dissatisfied. Mmmm. But he finds he can’t stop there; he concludes with a two-page final chapter which may be summarized in one sentence: “It is consciousness [as he, of course, has defined

it], with its power to make the vanishing instant of physical time live on as the felt movement of sensation, that makes it LIKE SOMETHING TO BE OURSELVES—and so sweetens and enriches the being of the external world FOR US” (p. 228). I, for one, find myself not persuaded.

Humphrey presents his ideas in a readable, almost folksy style. He does a convincing job of redirecting our attention to the importance of sensations and makes a strong case for the parallel existence of sensation and perception. But with the focus on sensation, I was puzzled by the complete inattention paid to research on sensory-deprivation. Likewise, he makes no reference to Julian Jaynes’ *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1976) or Gerald Edelman’s *Bright, Air, Brilliant Fire: On the Matter of the Mind* (1992), which would seem to have some natural points of overlap. ☐

Hughes, Elaine Farris. 1994. *Writing from the Inner Self*.
New York: HarperCollins.

Debora F. Van Hoorn

Writing from the Inner Self provides both teachers and students with 48 writing exercises and nearly 300 writing ideas designed to foster self-awareness through self-examination. Elaine Farris Hughes claims these writing and meditation activities will free students’ creativity, inspire their imagination, and help them overcome writer’s block. The book is designed so that students can use it on their own and the instructors can choose their own level of involvement. Each of the exercises employs some type of inner focus, meditation (meditation is used here as a catch-all phrase for a variety of inner-focusing techniques, including conscious breathing, visualization, sensory awareness, guided imagery, and memory recall), encouraging readers to look inside themselves first and discover personal connections with the subject before they even begin to write. Hughes, retired from Nassau Community College in New York City, developed these exercises as a way to generate in-class journal entries. Many of these ideas were first published in 1991 in a trade book for the general public. Hughes revised and expanded that book of 63 exercises into this text for college students. An instructor’s guide is also available.

The exercises are arranged into three sections with each of the twelve chapters containing four exercises. The exercises are grouped in such a way as to lead writers progressively deeper into themselves and into their writing. While the starting point is the physical body, the exercises quickly lead into the broader, more abstract realms of feelings, memories, self-awareness, observations, events, and imagination. Each exercise contains some form of meditation, introspection, body awareness, observation, or a reliving of past events.

Part One, The Inner World, contains twenty exercises on The Body (e.g., Recapture a feeling of yourself as an infant), Childhood Memories (Remember your first love), Intense Emotions (Contemplate an incident of early rejection), Memorable Moments (Remember a moment of rebellion), and Observing Your Life (Think about your life in relation to popular songs).

Part Two, The Outer World, contains sixteen exercises on Seeing (Objectively examine a kitchen utensil), People (Observe people in a public place), Places (Explore your ideas of home), and Events (Think about a modern hero).

Part Three, The World of Invention, contains twelve exercises on Reading (Bring a character from literature to life in your mind), Mind Play (Imagine you wake up to find you've changed sex overnight), and Imagination (Relive a nightmare you've had).

Part Four of the text is a handbook of sorts, covering among others such concepts as voice, audience, and revision. Here Hughes guides students in molding their freewriting into an essay, using the multiple drafts of prologue as an example. The book closes with an appendix of sources and some sample student writings that correlate to exercises given in the text.

Hughes, acknowledging the often difficult task of writing, encourages and explains a traditional method of process writing that "requires *all* your resources—mental alertness, imagination, emotional response, a relationship with chaos, physical stamina, and the courage to face the critics who will read what you have written" (p. 3). The exercises presented in this text are easy to follow intellectually; however, the number and types of questions may prove a bit overwhelming emotionally to some students. While this text could prove interesting in the classroom, the instructor must be prepared to deal with students' innermost thoughts, sometimes frightening and messy, which result from this type of assignment. The Inner World section causes some concern. Several of the writing exercises might prompt some deep levels of sharing best handled by a trained counselor. Consider the following suggested writing assignments and the manner in which some students might respond:

- Write a personal essay about all the major scars you have acquired (physical, psychological, or emotional) (pp. 34–36).
- Write a short essay that details an early rejection and explain how this experience has affected your concept of yourself and your life (pp. 63–65).
- Write out your full confession of an incident that continues to cause you shame, guilt, or embarrassment (pp. 66–68).
- Recall an incident in which you felt intense anger. Stay in touch with the anger until it begins to dissolve. Don't turn away from it or talk yourself out of it. Give up your anger only when you're ready (pp. 68–70).

Hughes gives little advice, and there has been little written on what the instructor should do with such self-disclosure. Marti Singer's 1990 article "Responding to Intimacies and Crises in Students' Journals" (*English Journal*, 79) addresses the issue of self-disclosure in the composition classroom. When Singer received some personal revelation via a student's writing, she was "flattered and awed by the trust and confidence displayed through long detailed

accounts of students' lives and experiences" (p. 72). However, she then wondered how to respond to such sharing and sought out answers in composition theory. She found that "there is very little written about ways of responding to...personal writing" (p. 73). While other articles and books deal tangentially with the issue of self-disclosure, there is a gap—no, more of a gaping hole—in the research in this area. Until such research is undertaken, the following books may help clarify the instructor's and the student's role in a classroom where personal writing occurs: *Inside Out: A Guide to Writing* by Maurice Scharton and Janice Neuleib (1993), *The Hero Within* by Carol S. Pearson (1989), *Presence of Mind: Writing and the Domain Beyond the Cognitive*, edited by Alice G. Brand and Richard L. Graves (1994), and *Coming on Center* by James Moffett (1981). Overall, Hughes' textbook could be a catalyst for some wonderful expressive writing. However, be prepared to deal with the ensuing writing which may be uncomfortably personal. ☺

Kalamaras, George. 1994. *Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension: Symbolic Form in the Rhetoric of Silence*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Susan Becker

This slim volume is a short course in both quantum physics and the humanities: philosophy, religion, music, and literature. Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Levi-Strauss, Keats, Coleridge, Eliot, and Pirsig all play a role in developing the author's argument that silence is a mode of knowing.

Kalamaras opens with a reference to the Eastern mystic Rumi who stated that we know each other in unspoken ways. Nevertheless, notes the author, "As a practitioner of silence, I have sometimes felt at odds with the intellectual and academic community" because in the West silence is often cast as the "bad guy" (p. xi). The argument for promoting silence that follows is logical, informing, and engaging. Kalamaras shows reader awareness by using the first person "I" to personalize sometimes convoluted thinking, allowing the reader to share not only in the author's mental process but also in his conclusion: Practitioners of silence no longer need to keep silent because silence is a demonstrable mode of knowing.

To support this thesis, the author provides seven chapters replete with endnotes and a glossary of thirty terms from Eastern philosophy and religion. The one hundred and thirty works consulted identify AEPL scholars and charter members James Moffett and Charles Suhor alongside Jung, Suzuki, Eckhart, Shakespeare, Bakhtin, Britton, Elbow, Vygotsky, and others.

With the definition that silence is an emptiness that is full, Chapter One, "Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension," sets up the argument that silence is a mode of knowing. The culprit for silence as emptiness, claims Kalamaras, is Western rational thought. By associating power with language (i.e., discourse as enfranchisement), it follows that silence or lack of discourse is annihilation. Mistrust of silence in the West is the result of Plato's classical view reinforced by Aristotle, objectivism, feminism, and poststructuralism (p. 9).

But Eastern philosophy cultivates reciprocity by locating reciprocity in opposites. Contrary to the dualistic Western view of language and silence as opposites, these dualisms construct knowledge in reciprocal fashion. Meaning need not be dependent on language in oral or written form. If rhetoric is defined as a symbolic act that makes meaning, then silence is a rhetoric.

Kalamaras personalizes his thesis in the second chapter before investigating theory, poetics, and the symbolic complexity in later chapters. Chapter Two, "Into the Chaos: Writing Across the Curriculum and the Tao of Change" answers the question: What role does the teacher of process writing play in writing across the curriculum? Kalamaras uses James Moffett's and Charles Suhor's emphasis on the reciprocity of silence and meaning to investigate theories of composing and curriculum development as shaped by intuition, ambiguity, tenuousness, and chaos. Ever present is the paradox of chaos and order. Comparing his position as writing consultant in the biology department to a zebra fish in an aquarium of leeches, Kalamaras explains that he survived the challenging consultancy not by trying to overcome contradictions but by immersing himself in them. Talking and listening (i.e., collaborating and reciprocating) led to a synthesis of discourse with silence, separate with connected knowing. When the language of the consultant and the language of the biology faculty actually inhabited each other, the two sides arrived at a condition of mutual understanding and eventual success in what had appeared to be a doomed consulting assignment across the curriculum.

Chapters Three and Four provide the meaty center of the book. "Classical Rhetoric, Objectivism, Mysticism, and the Great Divide" examines the ways classical rhetorical theory, objectivism, and Western mysticism have fostered a mistrust of silence. Starting with the Gospel According to John and moving backward and forward through times and places, Kalamaras traces the relationship between words and origins via Plato's *Phaedrus*, Aristotle's development of Plato's binary vision, and Cartesian perceptions. The author then examines Eastern modes of thought that allow a less dichotomous and more fluid approach. Jung and Eckhart, Western thinkers who have examined Eastern modes, authenticate the "vacuum-plenum" paradox as a legitimate merging of words into silence as in "OM" (p. 90). Britton and Polanyi have, in turn, enlarged this interpretive framework, showing that individual utterances do contribute to meaning. Nevertheless, the presence of a fixed categorical reality in Western thought makes it difficult for Westerners to accept as valid the complex ambiguity of mystical experience and practice necessary to the language/silence paradox.

As Chapter Four posits, although our culture fosters the binary thinking so antithetical to silence, Western art relies on the nonconceptual as a way of making meaning. "Paradox and the Sacred: The Still Point of the Turning World" uses poetics to validate movement and stillness, word and silence. Sound devices

and metaphor have been used by such poets as Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Blake, and Eliot to expand the perception of reality by altering time and emotion. Their successors in projectivist (open form) verse and talk poetry have added tricks of typography for short-circuiting the categorical to focus on symbolic form. Language and its gaps reciprocally create meaning. Kalamaras recalls an early awareness to “both the harmony *and* the melody, the stillness *and* the dance” (p. 144). Their method is not unlike the Zen koan or nonsensical statement designed to prepare the mind for a nonverbal experience of reality.

The three final chapters are “An Intimate Immensity: Silence and the Paradox of Attention”; “The Physics of Meditation: Silence and the Garland of Letters”; and “The Death of the Self: Poststructuralism and a Rhetoric of Silence.” Together they round out Kalamaras’ argument that silence is not transcendental. The quantum model reveals silence as generative, a symbolic act that makes meaning and is therefore a rhetoric compatible with dialogic theories of composing. The following are highlights of the author’s argument:

- Yoga or “union” is a practice that leads to oneness of mind and body, stillness in movement, the “zero” experience. This paradox is generative.
- According to Gaston Bachelard, the paradox of knowing is not knowing: “Behind dark curtains, snow seems to be whiter” (p. 153). The apparent contradiction is reciprocal.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson dissolves dualities with awareness of “the wise silence” when within man lies “the soul of the whole” (p. 156).
- T.S. Eliot writes a corollary for silence and language when he says, “at the still point, there the dance is” (p. 160).
- The mantra, “OM,” reveals that silence is constituted of sound, and the word constitutes and dissolves itself endlessly.
- Awareness of silence is a symbolic form of interpretation that makes meaning as does any rhetoric.
- Quantum physics via vacuum diagrams verifies that empty space is not empty (the vacuum-plenum).
- Since reality is not a stable, definable condition but is shaped through acts of perception, nonconceptual understanding itself is a symbolic form that makes meaning.
- Silence retains the potential of language by expanding the complexity of language into “its ‘original way’ or ‘radical vital potential’ from which all form manifests” (p. 196).
- Maurice Blanchot’s concept of the paradox of life and death simultaneously decenters and reconstitutes the self in symbolic form.

Thus, concludes Kalamaras, if both quantum physics and deconstructionist theory suggest that symbolic forms construct knowledge and silence has been shown to be such a form, *then silence is a way of knowing that makes meaning*. With bold erudition and much documentation, the author comes full circle to vali-

date the paradox of discourse and its void, silence, as a valid methodology in the teaching and learning of writing.

This landmark little book is a volume of the SUNY series, *Literacy, Culture, and Learning: Theory and Practice*, with Alan C. Purves as editor. George Kalamaras, a writing professor at Indiana University-Purdue University and a recent recipient of a poetry fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts, was present at the AEPL session on silence during the Conference on College Composition and Communication 1994 in Nashville. From the cover of his book, which features an attractive pen and ink rendering named “Yogi,” to the detailed index at its conclusion, Kalamaras takes readers on an intellectual journey through Eastern and Western culture. His challenging argument is a viable contribution to knowledge on the affective domain to which AEPL is dedicated. ☺

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