

## Books

In sum, this short but comprehensive book covers key aspects of introductory psychodynamic therapy technique that are rarely addressed in such a candid, pragmatic, and entertaining fashion. There are far too few books on psychoanalytic technique in general, let alone books aimed specifically at the beginner (Cabaniss et al., 2011; Fenichel, 1941; Volkan, 2011). I anticipate that students will come away from this book feeling as if they had a conversation with an experienced, thoughtful, and very human supervisor/instructor. Usher's willingness to show her own vulnerabilities and sense of humour may help to decrease the trainee's desire for omniscience and omnipotence, ease his harsh work superego, and reduce his anxiety. Her first edition on psychodynamic psychotherapy technique (Usher, 1993) was very well received, and I predict that today's clinicians will eagerly acquire this updated version.

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### The Age of Insight

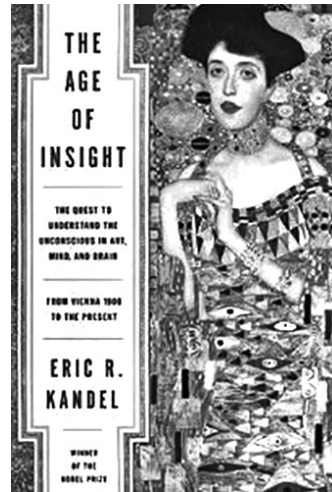
by Eric Kandel

New York: Random House, 2012, 636 pp.

Eric Kandel left Vienna when he was nine years of age, went into analysis when he was in college, and then went to medical school, because at that time medical school was a prerequisite to becoming a psychoanalyst. He then changed course and became a neuroscientist and received the Nobel prize in physiology or medicine in 2000 for his work on memory. In this book, Kandel argues for more interaction between the arts and humanities

on the one hand, and the sciences, particularly brain science, on the other.

The book is encyclopedic in scope and is densely written. The author describes the interaction between artists and scientists that took place in the salons of Vienna, circa 1900. Then, with the advent of photography, the mission of art changed and portrait painters could focus, as did Freud and the writer Arthur Schnitzler, on the unconscious emotional life of their sitters. Schnitzler and the painter Gustav Klimt had a more accurate idea of female sexuality than did Freud. Klimt, whose portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer is reproduced on this book's jacket—portraying a stylized representation of ova and spermatozoa decorating her dress—painted heterosexual, homosexual, and masturbatory aspects of female sexuality as well as female aggression, in his depiction of Judith after she had killed Holofernes.



In the paintings of Oskar Kokoschka, the importance of the hands in conveying emotion was stressed, and in the works of Egon Schiele, the anxiety. The art historian Riegl argued that, in considering a painting, the contribution of the beholder, which includes past experience of looking at paintings, must be included. (I would say a bit like counter-transference.)

Vision has two components: the bottom-up contribution of the eyes, which follows gestalt principles and is largely inborn, and the top-down contribution of the brain. If the latter is absent, the individual suffers from what Freud called agnosia; one can see lines but is unable to recognize objects. The top-down is based on past experiences and involves hypothesis-testing. Vision is our most important source of information about the world, and about half of the brain is devoted to it. Perception of the face is particularly important, which I think would support the behaviour of the analysts who place their chair behind, but also somewhat to the side of, the couch.

Following Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Helmholtz, Freud postulated the existence of unconscious mentation. Kandel states that neuroscientists have discovered that unconscious mentation is even more prevalent than Freud thought. I think that some of the findings Kandel refers to go beyond Freud's concept of a dynamic unconscious.

Creativity is linked to a relaxation of controls, such as occurs spontaneously in manic-depressive states and in what Kris called regression in the service of the ego. All human societies have some form of art; in primitive societies, this was a communal affair and had survival value. Neanderthals had no art and became extinct. We are descended from Cro-Magnons, who did have art.

A union of humanities and science is in the far-distant future. Even in the field of physics, quantum theory and the theory of relativity cannot both be right, so that no grand synthesis, such as envisioned in E. O. Wilson's *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* is possible. However, there can be more interaction across disciplines.

As we know, many analysts have argued for an end to our not-so-splendid isolation. This is a superb book.

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### **Mind Works: Technique and Creativity in Psychoanalysis**

by *Antonino Ferro*

New York: Routledge, 2009, 225 pp.

Wilfred Bion gave birth to a number of offspring. Though loosely bound by the family name of "Intersubjective," these progeny have very distinctive, creative voices and reflect both the individual psychoanalytic personalities and the cultures in which they developed (Bohleber, 2013). Lawrence Brown, James Grotstein, and Thomas Ogden, for example, are distinctly American in tone, whereas Antonino Ferro is quintessentially Italian. Madeleine and Willy Baranger, reflecting South American field theory, are close "cousins" of this Intersubjective family.

Why did this book initially seem frustrating and confusing and require rereadings to make a coherent impression on this reviewer? It is partly an element of Ferro's style: he displays his own reverie as he writes about theory and analytic work, with inferential

