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Reviews

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REVIEWS

Starkey, David ed. *Teaching Writing Creatively*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton-Cook/Heinemann, 1998.

Anne E. Mullin

Each of the 17 short essays David Starkey selected for his collection, *Teaching Writing Creatively*, gives value to the reader. But the value of the book to writing teachers is far more than the sum of the selections. Starkey has chosen and arranged the contributions so that they speak to each other as well as to readers.

And speak they do in voices that are familiar (Toby Fulweiler, Wendy Bishop, John Boe, Art Young, and Muriel Harris, for example) and perhaps less familiar (Lee Martin, Alys Culhane, Hephzibah Roskelly, among others.) These are all compelling voices of obviously fine teachers, candidly telling us what they do and why, what works and what sometimes does not, in a kind of call and response of practice alternating with theory. Swelling the chorus are voices of students, also, liberally represented to give refreshing testimony about how they are learning to write.

Starkey's underlying premise for the book is the need for "polyculture" or "cross-pollination" of areas of writing too often "isolated from each other"—in other words, the need to break down arbitrary and unfruitful distinctions between creative writing and composition pedagogies. Will Hochman, in his essay on using Richard Hugo's creative writing legacy (specifically *The Triggering Town*, 1984) states the position plainly:

Whether you are a teacher of creative writing or composition, or both, is not important . . . good student writing is only marginally about genre. It has more to do with intelligence, creativity, and language skills. (44-45)

Indeed, teachers of freshman composition, introductory literature courses, creative writing workshops for beginners or advanced students, as well as those who might like to foster writing activities in, say, a history or anthropology course, will find the discussions and examples engaging and useful.

Both newer and experienced teachers will appreciate the diversity of strategies discussed. For example, while veteran writing teachers may have been assigning collage writing or process notes for years, treatments of such techniques in *Teaching Writing Creatively* lead to fresh thinking and connections to other strategies we may not have tried before. Toby Fulweiler's "Writing Snapshots," written as a series of "crots," demonstrates such an alternative approach. A few pages later, we find Sheryl Fontaine and Francie Quaas demonstrating their use of collages; this chapter now seems more appealingly "new" because of its rela-

tionship to the Fulweiler piece and because of connections between the two groups of students quoted. In its turn, Starkey's own article on using the Language Poets in his writing classes—even freshman composition classes—gains in meaning and possibilities for application because it follows Fulweiler and echoes Hochman's piece on using Hugo. Further, Hans Ostrom's "Carom Shots" also invokes Hugo in describing some uses of imitation as a liberatory technique for writing teachers.

A reader revels in such cross connections. Michael Steinberg's piece may raise questions about student writing that appears to be off-the-wall fabrication; Boe's "The Degrees of the Lie" helps us understand that situation. Boe also gives us insightful ideas about requiring students to deliver their rough drafts orally, while Alys Culhane describes responding to student writing orally, on tape.

Several authors are concerned with developing students' sense of themselves as writers and as playing other roles in their own writing process. Muriel Harris applies a version of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Inventory to spur self-aware talk and writing. Patrick Bizzaro draws on Ann Berthoff's concept of "triadicty" to make students consciously aware of their "interpretant" role (a C.S. Peirce term). Lee Martin has his students seek to discover their role as subjects or sources for writing by means of a "dialogue" with their stories. Wendy Bishop tells of getting her students to take on a teacher role in writing responses to their own work, in dialogue with themselves as writers. John Paul Tassoni likewise writes about dialoguing with his students' journals, in which they "dialog" with readings, class discussions and their own writing. And so it goes.

Starkey's metaphor of cross-pollination certainly plays out generatively as the chapters unfold. Three main divisions of the book are posted as "The Writing Class as a Site for Creativity," "Classroom Practices: Teaching Creatively" and "From Discovery to Response: New Approaches to Creative Writing." These divisions are easily (and best) ignored, however, by readers who want to indulge in the pleasures of ideas buzzing among the different contributors. *JAEPL* readers, especially, will want to follow up many of the relatively sparse but choice references at the ends of chapters to maintain this buzz.

JAEPL readers will also appreciate an important issue that Starkey touches on in his introduction, when he pays tribute to Donald Murray and Peter Elbow as teachers and writers (not included in the book) "who have transgressed against conventional notions of style, voice, and genre." Noting that "expressivists are generally out of favor in rhetoric and composition graduate programs, and the murky, still largely ill-defined world of creative writing may seem theoretically defective," he posits (citing Susan Hunter and Jane Tompkins) a certain amount of anxiety about "teaching composition in a departmentally or institutionally unapproved way."

Will *Teaching Writing Creatively* help relieve some of that anxiety for graduate students, who may be feeling (as one confided to me recently) a push to conduct her freshman composition course as a site for the production of corporate-inspired documents? Yes. Will the book help confirm and stimulate those of us long committed to the integration of "creative" practices in our composition classrooms? Yes. Will it encourage more collections documenting even more novel approaches to teaching writing in creative ways? One hopes so. ☺

McPhail, Mark Lawrence. *Zen in the Art of Rhetoric: An Inquiry into Coherence*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Keith Rhodes

This book made me want much more than it gave me. It is still hard to sort out if that is praise or blame. The compromise I want to suggest is praising the author but blaming the book. Ultimately, the book cannot live up to the standard and promise it constructs for us; but then few books could. That it comes closer than most is a credit to its author's impressively broad and deep understanding.

Any discussion of McPhail's book has to start with a nod at the sheer audacity of his effort. His courage starts right in the title, a clear reference to both Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery* and Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, two landmark texts in the history of Zen in the West. Just in case we might miss the point, quotations from Herrigel and discussions of Pirsig run throughout the book. Meanwhile, McPhail has aims even grander than his title suggests. McPhail means to explain not just the genuine nature of Zen, Sophism, rhetoric, postmodernism, and quantum mechanics, but also their merger in a radically different paradigm of rhetoric. Even beyond that, he means to demonstrate how this new paradigm might help us resolve troubling issues not just of theory but of race, gender and other social divisions.

While McPhail's book is not entirely up to meeting these grand ambitions, those ambitions produce valuable, if sometimes frustrating, results. The best of those results relate to a more limited aim, the further explanation and exemplification of McPhail's key concept of coherence. This seems to be a powerful idea in its best moments, genuinely too subtle to be summarized briefly here. The book is most inspiring in the moments when McPhail explains directly what he means by this concept of coherence. Nevertheless, too often McPhail settles for general waves in the direction of what seems a more complete and vital internal scheme in his own mind. In the end, distracted by much more extensive repetitions of less original postmodern arguments, many readers will find it difficult to be sure that they grasp McPhail's often sketchy explanations of his tantalizing idea.

Had its presentation been different, less traditional, one might suspect the book of a very Zen-like minimalism and organic form, meant to inspire insight more than to articulate concrete concepts. As it is, the book seems merely difficult, mostly following traditional scholarly models but doing so a bit inconsistently. Perhaps this is in part because, like so many traditional scholarly books, it is entirely constructed of pieces that have been published before, in a variety of journals. While McPhail has tended scrupulously to transitions and internal references between them, the chapters still diverge and overlap enough that it becomes hard to remain charitably aware that McPhail seeks a more specialized connotation of the term "coherence."

Ultimately, the paradoxes of the book come to seem less necessarily artful and more simply frustrating. For a book that urges us toward cooperative dia-

logue, it often insists on its own arguments, sometimes with cascades of fervent “musts” insisting upon immediate acceptance. For a book that hammers on the paradox by which criticism often takes on the qualities it criticizes, it—perhaps too predictably—very often shows the qualities it criticizes. Most deeply ironic is its dualistic trope of pitting all-bad dualism versus all-good coherence. Perhaps most puzzling is the consistent pummeling of traditional philosophical “seriousness” done in the unmistakable tones of traditional philosophical seriousness, if with a postmodern slant to its jargon. As Derrida, Cixous, and Barthes have best demonstrated, the most attractive way to present a genuinely new paradigm credibly is at least to attempt to use its methods. Given McPhail’s apparent ambitions, it is simply odd that instead he so often uses the very techniques of “essentialist” rhetorical argument that he repeatedly criticizes.

Toward the end, McPhail seems almost to address the tension created by these paradoxes of style and substance. He points out that he still believes in having students “honor the form” of traditional rhetoric, analogizing his belief with the way martial arts students rehearse traditional movements before leaving them behind in advanced, actual performance. Still, he never articulates an open argument for his own obvious use of the very forms he criticizes; and since he uses them in an advanced argument, not an exercise, any simple analogy with the martial arts breaks down almost as soon as the inference is drawn.

Even so, to focus only on this book’s failure to meet its own apparent ambitions would be to give McPhail far too little credit. His effort to define a rhetorical coherence that is genuinely constructive, of better communities and better ideas, arises out of a profound understanding of the inadequacies of both cultural critique and postmodern criticism in their main current forms. As he shows so well, these popular approaches too often ignore their implicit and even complicit furthering of the very problems they aim to solve. He understands clearly how Zen might help both forms of criticism to sort out some of their current problems, making them more fruitful by leading their practitioners out of more shallow, oppositional stances into a deeper, if messier, acceptance of paradox.

Further, McPhail is a consistently clear and broadly knowledgeable translator of Eastern thought. Interestingly in light of the title, Taoism often provides McPhail critical guidance for examining rhetoric itself, with Zen alone more completely supporting his examination of critical theories. In any event, McPhail not only understands Eastern thought as a whole well enough to explain it clearly but also knows how to use Eastern thought as a powerful clarifying lens for examining the nature of rhetoric. When he does this directly, shown best in his explication of the nonviolent rhetorical coherence of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, McPhail genuinely does extend our understanding of rhetoric and point the way toward the creation of a new paradigm out of existing, if scattered, potentials. McPhail seems to indicate that a resurrection of old Sophistic practices in light of Eastern thought could well support a kind of non-violent rhetorical martial art form. This, in turn, could help us understand tangibly the greater value of coherence—here perhaps roughly interpreted as a spirit of arguing toward wisdom rather than striving only for victory.

The good parts, then, are very good indeed. Moreover, the good parts genuinely do follow McPhail’s own advice about finding common ground, about see-

ing the complementary point of *yang* in every *yin*. Particularly effective in this regard are his limited sections of personal narrative, always warm and engaging even while being carefully applied to the book's larger purposes.

Still, even after accepting the likely value of the book's mysterious yet powerful core, I found its discussion too often diverted by an almost dogmatic faith in postmodernism (a paradox indeed). It seemed strange beyond the other quirks that someone writing about unique sources of wisdom should conform to this almost stereotypical feature of so much recent critical work in rhetoric. The attitude that postmodernism would eventually cure all rhetorical ills has probably crested and passed, but it runs all through these articles. Perhaps that is largely because they are revisions from the heyday of that attitude in the late '80s and early '90s, but the problem seems worse than that. In long stretches, McPhail's text exemplifies the circular barrage of jargon that has given postmodernism more force as an argumentative stance than as a way to accomplish anything.

Further, since McPhail's yearning for solutions to what Ann Berthoff has famously called "killer dichotomies" is so close to Berthoff's own passion, it is almost mysterious why McPhail does not examine her approaches to these same problems. In his best moments McPhail reminds me greatly of Berthoff, at once intellectual, constructive, and rigorously humane. I found myself hungry for more of those moments, dreading each new cycle of "deconstructing essentialism." Berthoff's own resort to the mediating power of American pragmatism seems much more likely to reach McPhail's ends than does his own attachment to a circular, "theoretically correct" version of postmodernism. In a crucial passage just before his discussion of King and Gandhi, where his ultimately mysterious vision of coherence seemed most nearly at hand, I felt as if McPhail was on the verge of this discovery and lacked only a better sense of his real allies.

That result is easily understood in the context of what gets published in most of our scholarship in the field, however. Ultimately, I see the worst parts of the book as flowing from the fashion trends in an entire discourse community and the best parts as written from McPhail's own understanding. Thus, I come away disappointed by the book but impressed by its author. I look forward to future works in which McPhail spends rather more time on his own insights and central message. My intuition is that at such a time we could point back to this book and find in it the beginnings of the larger understanding it made me crave but ultimately could not articulate satisfactorily.

This book is still well worth reading—a paradox that I hope is not too troubling by this point. Perhaps I want too much. I do wonder if that degree of plain statement of anything so doubly ineffable as the "Zen of rhetoric" is even possible. Yet the very form of McPhail's book argues that we should at least be able to derive a stable concept of coherence out of the explanation, something I found hard to do in any reliable way. If McPhail's real intent was to leave readers wanting more, he has succeeded admirably. ☺

Hirshfield, Jane, ed. *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

Ellen Davis

While listening to "All Things Considered" on National Public Radio one afternoon, I heard part of a story. It was about Indian women who, in a state of radical undress, appeared at the marketplace, shocked merchants and shoppers, and then disappeared back into the woods. These women, according to the broadcast, were mystics, seers, prophets. The images were of women as outcasts, of women as figures who shock others into a new kind of sight, and of the market as a gathering of an abundance of earthly pleasures that also points to a spirit world. Soon afterward I wrote a poem about such a female apparition.

It was with great pleasure, then, that while reading poet, translator and essayist Jane Hirshfield's anthology, *Women in Praise of the Sacred: 43 Centuries of Spiritual Poetry by Women*, I learned more about the tradition of shedding conventional dress. "Bhakti (devotional) poets" (77) devote their lives to the ecstatic praise of Shiva. Mirabai of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is the most well-known of this group; Robert Bly translated several of her poems in this collection. A twelfth century poet, Mahadeviyakka, wrote the following about her practice and belief:

(On Her Decision to Stop Wearing Clothes)

Coins in the hand
Can be stolen,
But who can rob this body
Of its own treasure?

The last thread of clothing
Can be stripped away
But who can peel off Emptiness
That nakedness covering all?

Fools, while I dress
In the Jasmine Lord's morning light,
I cannot be shamed—
What would you have me hide under silk
And the glitter of jewels?

(78)

The theme of giving up worldly goods to refine and redefine the mystic's soul is one that transcends culture and geography. Hirshfield's book equally represents the tradition of immanence, of refusing the philosophy of dualism between sacred and profane. Many of the poets here embrace physical love, revel in nature and cherish beautiful things, and find good and godliness in the world rather than looking beyond it.

As she does by way of introduction to each of the poets in this chronologically organized anthology, Hirshfield gives a brief personal history of Mahadeviyakka, the *bhakti* poet who died in her twenties in a burst of light according to the stories. Lal Ded, a fourteenth century Kashmiri poet, followed the Shiva-worship path of "oneness between God and the phenomenal world" (118). In her travels, she was teased by children for singing and dancing in a state of undress. A sympathetic cloth merchant sold her two batches of fabric of equal size. Each time someone taunted her, she tied a knot on her left shoulder; each time someone gave her praise, she tied a knot on the right shoulder. At the end of the day she returned to the cloth merchant to show him that "nothing had changed: whatever praise or blame she received, they were of equal weight, and she accepted both with the same attitude of equanimity" (118).

Through her writing, scholarship, and spiritual practice, Jane Hirshfield is eminently qualified to edit this powerful anthology. While many of the translations were completed by such writers as Willis Barnstone, Robert Bly, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Langston Hughes, Michael Hamburger, Stanley Kunitz, Jane Kenyon, and Ariel and Chana Bloch, Hirshfield translated about half of the poems herself, either by knowing the language or by using many scholarly translations. In addition to her four books of poetry, including the highly praised *The October Palace*, Hirshfield also translated, with Mariko Aratani, the beautifully titled *The Ink Dark Moon: Love Poems by Ono no Komachi and Izumi Shikibu*, two Japanese poets included in *Women in Praise of the Sacred*. In her exquisite collection of essays, *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry*, she writes of her admiration for Japanese poetry:

The Japanese women's concerns—love and transience—paralleled my own, and despite the passage of a millennium since its composition, their poetry held for me an immediacy and power that was life-altering. Not only did it affect my own writing, it led me three years later to undertake the study of Buddhism; in 1979 I was lay-ordained in the lineage of Sôtô Zen. (69)

As promised in the title, forty-three centuries of women's spiritual poetry are indeed on display in the collection. The title can only suggest the range of cultures, experiences, and systems of belief these women's words convey. The first entry is by Enheduanna, ca. 2300 B.C.E., "the earliest identified author of either sex in world literature" (3) and daughter of a Sumerian king. Her hymns to the moon-goddess Inanna survive on cuneiform tablets. From ca. 1000 B.C.E. appears Makeda, Queen of Sheba, who bears King Solomon's son despite her request that he not take her to bed. Through his trick, the Queen must release him from his promise. But she turns the advantage to her grown son, whom King Solomon greets as his own. When he leaves the court to establish Solomon's lineage in Ethiopia, he takes God's Tabernacle. Hirshfield's commentary is as follows: "Again we see that wisdom lives not only by 'light' but also by the shadowy ways and skillful means of the Trickster" (12).

Hirshfield selects two beautiful fragments from Sappho, one an invitation to Aphrodite to visit Sappho's island: "...come to this / sacred place / encircled by

apple trees, / fragrant with offered smoke” (16). From the sixth century B.C.E., she offers the work of two of the earliest female followers of the Buddha. As Hirshfield points out in the introduction to the section of the Song of Songs that could have been written by the Shulammitte in a lovers’ exchange with King Solomon, poetry that mixes physical and spiritual love is not limited to Western philosophy. The idea appears in Tamil, Indian, and Sufi poets’ work as well: “[W]e also find the seeker and God portrayed as lover and Beloved in language that is openly erotic” (22).

In addition to great Chinese and Japanese poets, Hirshfield presents Ly Ngoc Kieu, 1041-1113, the earliest discovered woman writer from Vietnam. Here is her poem in full:

Birth, old age,
Sickness, and death.
From the beginning,
This is the way
Things have always been.
Any thought
Of release from this life
Will wrap you only more tightly
In its snares.
The sleeping person
Looks for a Buddha,
The troubled person
Turns toward meditation.
But the one who knows
That there’s nothing to seek
Knows too that there’s nothing to say.
She keeps her mouth shut.

(tr. by Thich Nhat Hanh and Jane Hirshfield)

(63)

The thread of seeking-through-not-seeking is one that is also woven across cultures and centuries in this anthology. Chinese Taoist Sun Bu-er of the twelfth century, considered one of the Seven Immortals, puts it this way:

Cut brambles long enough,
Sprout after sprout,
And the lotus will bloom
Of its own accord:
Already waiting in the clearing,
The single image of light.
The day you see this
The day you will become it.

(73)

The accomplished composer, scholar, and abbess Hildegard of Bingen’s songs

and antiphons are on display here, pieces that were sung to her own music. Another German poet of the thirteenth century, Mechtild of Magdeburg, saw “‘all things in God, and God in all things’” (85). Other Christian mystics whose poems are represented are Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila (who told her nuns “the Lord walks among pots and pans”) (144), Maria de’ Medici, Queen of France, the Austrian Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg, and Sor Juana Inèz de La Cruz.

Vittoria Colonna, to whom many of Michelangelo’s sonnets were addressed and whose work he believed was written in “sacred ink,” has two spiritual poems in the anthology. “A Georgia Sea Island Shout Song” and “Penny Jessye’s Death-bed Spiritual” reflect the voices of a slave and a former slave in North America. Two Nahuatl invocations, two Kwakiutl women’s prayers, an Osage woman’s initiation song, and a traditional Navajo prayer appear as well.

It’s fascinating to consider Hirshfield’s selections of poems by Anne Bradstreet, Emily Brontë, Emily Dickinson, H.D., Anna Akhmatova, Gabriela Mistral, Nelly Sachs, and Marina Tsvetaeva in the context of women’s spiritual writing. These magnificent poets, who each faced personal and political struggles, produced poetry that transcends the limits of their individual situations and speaks to the spirit level in all of us. ☺

Wagner, Betty Jane. *Educational Drama and Language Arts: What Research Shows*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton-Cook/Heinemann, 1998.

Jean R. Trounstin

I wish I'd had Betty Jane Wagner's book, *Educational Drama and Language Arts*, a few years ago when I was on a legislative task force recommending courses for women in prison. "We need skill based courses," was the cry from most opinion makers, "substantive" classes in computers, or "something that will help them get jobs." Drama, long thought of as an "extra," a "frill" in many educational communities, was certainly not on the short list of considered courses. Even if my ten years of producing plays with women in prison had convinced a senator or two that such a program might be as valuable as Life Skills, most—who took themselves to plays on weekend and encouraged their children to get involved in after school theater productions—had no idea of the many ways that dramatic arts can be embedded in the curriculum to effect one's thinking and language abilities. And at the time, without such a book, I had no ready reference from which to draw for studies that show the power of drama's influence on learning. For that is the greatest strength of Wagner's text. Just as Writing Across the Curriculum courses changed the face of many institutional approaches to writing, Wagner's book, because it is cumulative, comprehensive, and, at times, instructional, has potential to be an advocate for infusing drama into the curriculum.

Wagner, a professor at Roosevelt University and prolific author of articles and books on writing and the educational uses of drama, speaks for the need to produce educated students who undertake learning more than "just the facts, ma'am." She also reinforces the need for teachers who want their students to understand more fully "history, human interactions, scientific discoveries, the role of persons in various professions, the texture of the lives of characters in literature—in short, the larger school curriculum"(8). Her book is an antidote for those teachers told to teach for tests, for it shows that the most obvious route to a point is not always the most effective.

Wagner's expressed goal in what she calls a "user-friendly resource for doctoral students and others who are jumping into the icy waters of research on drama" (1) is to answer the question of "Does classroom drama actually teach anything?" (3). Her book focuses on improvisational drama, and Wagner aims to show how it can be used as "an intentional teaching strategy to enhance learning" (5). The book is organized into four parts: an overview where Wagner defines her terms and helps us see that she isn't suggesting creative drama classes per se, but the more radical idea of utilizing drama throughout the curriculum; a section presenting results and experiences from research studies on uses of drama and its effects on language and thinking; a third section based around the implications from studies involving drama and writing; and a final portion in which she looks at research paradigms and the future. Although drama "has remained marginal in American language arts classrooms" (11), Wagner's research indicates that it

should not be so. Drama studies presented in Wagner's text show it can improve reading, writing, and thinking skills.

Wagner spices up what sometimes becomes a fairly dry presentation of research results with detailed examples of drama in the classroom and chapters written by other educators, scholars, and pioneers in drama in education studies. David Booth's excellent chapter, "Language Power Through Working in Role," gives us an interesting case study from a Canadian junior high classroom where students engaged in a three-month study of the Holocaust. Booth watched students playing roles and the results of their learning from such role-playing in an eighth grade class at an alternative public school. Students studied the "resulting emigration of survivors to North America... based on the equity and diversity components of a curriculum document, and focusing on the Holocaust" (57). Some played filmmakers or families of survivors, while others took on the roles of immigration officers. Through writing, talking and performing, they gleaned insights that might not have been learned without the use of drama. For example, taking on the role of immigration officers "demanded that they [the students] accepted being members of a group that, in history, had resented and resisted the immigrants" (60).

Likewise, Anne Haas Dyson intrigues us with her chapter "The Children's Forum: Linking Writing, Drama, and the Development of Community in the Urban Classroom." She observes how drama can enhance "learning to write and learning to participate in a complex community marked by sociological differences" (149). Children performing their own texts in an urban elementary school dealt with tensions that in some ways paralleled the larger culture. Working through those texts, children under their third grade teacher's tutelage, talked through their conflicts in creating, casting, performing, and writing about a play based on super heroes. Haas shows us—again, in an experiential study that gives classroom details and conversation—how the children managed the use of drama and issues arising from it.

Wagner makes sure that her chapters involving theoretical framework, definition of terms, charts and hard data are interwoven with experiential studies. She realizes that the research material is understandably dense. Wagner and her contributors draw upon the complex work of psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner as well as drama educator Dorothy Heathcoate and theorists Howard Gardner and Jean Piaget. But Wagner and her contributors, on the whole, make their theories accessible to us.

I was least fond of the chapter by FranCina Conard, "Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Creative Drama," which was an empirical study designed to measure results that make a "case for drama" (211). Wagner herself admits a quantitative study doesn't seem to have the power of the experiential, ones like those she later tells us will define future research: "studies of cases, classroom ecology and teacher cognition and decision making, just to name a few" (346). She seems to include it because it has some use for those who need empirical research results in order to get funding, but frankly, it did not add much to her case.

This is not a book to show novices how to set up the use of drama in their classes, and research seems to be somewhat lacking in that area. Wagner empha-

sizes this point in a later chapter when she speaks to the need for enlivened research studies and for explicit drama in the classroom techniques: "We need to look at what good drama teachers do and need to know, which methods of introducing drama...are effective" (241). But even without being a how-to, *Educational Drama and Language Arts* is successful in conveying its potential for the development of language skills, particularly for K-12 students.

Sometimes I had to remind myself that Wagner's intention is to show the data. I wanted the writing to be less stark, more fanciful like theater itself. I wanted to learn more about the studies, glean more of the techniques than she actually presents on the page. I also wanted to jump into the text and add my own comments about information that might help the teacher less informed in drama technique. I imagined the uninitiated asking for more details about how David Booth got his students to use "their bodies to create two still dramatic pictures or tableaux" (59). Why, I wondered, was there no mention of Augusto Boal, one of the founders of such image theater, a practitioner known throughout Europe and Canada (*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, New York: Routledge, 1992)? He would have been a great help in understanding how to set up some scenarios. When I found reference at the end of Brian Edmiston and Jeffrey Wilhem's chapter, "Repositioning Views/Reviewing Position: Forming Complex Understandings in Dialogue," pointing me to a "more detailed analysis of how teachers...create dialogue among students and teachers in drama" (117), I wished there had been even more finger-pointing towards good drama in education pedagogy.

These minor weaknesses aside, Wagner has a terrific list of references for those of us who want to read more, and she does convince us that drama can teach a great deal. Through her thorough presentation of the research, she implies that the average teacher who seeks to use drama in the classroom can get results. One such average teacher is delightfully presented in Philip Taylor's chapter on "Reflective Practitioner Research." Taylor develops a case study of Carl, a teacher who doubted the use of drama and shied away from it as a "growing within type thing" (214). A workshop with a drama practitioner and a professional development project spurred him to discover that he could use drama in his curriculum but also provided a way for him to assess his own teaching. This chapter also shows how valuable it can be when experienced specialists work with other teachers, stimulating them to add drama to their curriculum.

Although I missed my opportunity to use Wagner's book to promote drama in prison, I won't fail to bring it with me this year to meetings at my college about developing our Arts in Mind program, where I plan to promote classes utilizing theater techniques to enhance other areas of learning. *Educational Drama and Language Arts* is not a book I'd take to read on my Spring Break, but it's definitely a book to be armed with in the slings and arrows world of educational assessment. 🍷