

journeys is, however, rich in practical suggestions for any scholar, practitioner, or researcher interested in combining technology and English studies. Apart from practical applications, though, the book helps to legitimize and celebrate an often-misunderstood and unappreciated area of research. Students and scholars of rhetoric and composition, linguistics, English education, ESL, creative writing, literary studies, and of course, computers and writing, will find this book a valuable and enjoyable developmental resource.

Middletown, PA

***Punishing Schools: Fear and Citizenship in American Public Education*** by William Lyons and Julie Drew. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Reviewed by Timothy Barnett, Northeastern Illinois University

*Punishing Schools: Fear and Citizenship in American Public Education* describes punishment as a powerful, systemic force in education that stems from a culture of fear and operates on multiple levels: From the bureaucrats who “punish” schools and students by drastically underfunding public education to the schools themselves who punish students by criminalizing youth and difference and establishing prison-like facilities for wealthy and poor alike. This study of two Ohio high schools—one a wealthy, mostly white suburban school and the other a poor, predominantly Black inner-city school—will primarily interest those who view education as a critical tool for democracy since the book argues convincingly that opportunities for progressive education are increasingly compromised by powerful state and corporate interests. It should also appeal to the growing numbers concerned with our country’s efforts to balance civil rights and public safety.

Compositionists will also find this book significant because many of us view literacy as central to democratic education and because Lyons’s and Drew’s focus on the precarious role of public schools is suggestive of the place writing programs often find themselves. Like the schools Lyons and Drew describe, composition programs are under surveillance by the university, public, and state (who simultaneously require, seek to control, and demean literacy instruction), as they also represent these groups, disciplining students so that they fit in, linguistically, with societal norms. We are the punished and the punishers, even as we espouse liberatory goals, and *Punishing Schools* highlights significant parallels between public schools as depicted by Lyons and

Drew and composition—arguably the most public and contested educational subject of all.

*Punishing Schools* consists of six chapters, with chapters 1 and 6 detailing the book's often compelling argument. Chapter 2 describes the conflicts present in "Suburbia High School" (SHS), a state of the art institution with upper class white students and high tech surveillance techniques, while chapter 3 focuses on the movie *Pleasantville* as the authors suggest the multiple ways popular culture contributes to the demonization of youth and difference and helps construct identity at schools such as SHS. Chapter 4 documents the politics and history behind Ohio's troubled urban schools, and chapter 5 offers a close study of "Urban High," an inner-city school whose plight as a "school without a neighborhood" exemplifies the difficulties of urban education and the abandonment of urban communities.

The book succeeds on many levels but also reminds us just how difficult it is to comprehensively analyze something as complex as public education. In particular I appreciate Lyons's and Drew's overall argument that the state punishes schools—both "good" and "bad"—as a way of deflecting attention from the fact that it is not investing in education. Schools pass on this punishment to students, feeding off of a culture of fear and conflict stemming from exaggerated images of dangerous youth preying on each other and on society. Because of this culture of fear, Lyons and Drew argue, middle class administrators, parents, and teachers focus on students rather than the state as the "problem," and, even more, focus on those who are already marginalized—inner city youth of color—as their primary fear. For their part, inner city communities have been virtually abandoned by the state and, left to fend for themselves as a result of white and capital flight, have few resources to fight the legal, political, and cultural battles necessary to make real change. Ultimately, Lyons and Drew suggest that because our educational critiques depend on misplaced fears of youth and racial difference rather than a comprehensive critique of the state, regressive goals for education—which use strategies of discipline to conserve and expand existing nodes of power—are prevailing over democratic ones.

*Punishing Schools*, then, provides a compelling theoretical argument that is complemented and supported by rich empirical detail and thoughtful analysis of many issues central to education in a post-Columbine, post-9/11 world. For example, Lyons and Drew provide multi-layered observations of Suburbia and Urban High Schools, which demonstrate how particular kinds of fears and hostility are directed at white suburban as well as Black urban youth. In conjunction with these analyses, the authors also follow Henry Giroux and others by suggesting the need to look at cultural texts, such as films, as instruments of pedagogy that "teach" all of us how to fit into a culture intent on

both hiding and maintaining white male power. Finally, the authors' history of public education in Ohio (as depicted through newspaper accounts, legal records, state histories, and alumni records) offers a detailed and damning narrative of the ways politics and influence can trump the needs of children, and, ultimately, democracy. As this outline of the many forms of research and analysis in *Punishing Schools* suggests, the authors have done a great deal of homework, and many different kinds of homework, to build their case. As the broad scope of their argument might also suggest, however, there are sometimes gaps between the data that are generated and the overall argument the authors present.

A few examples from the text will help illustrate this point. *Punishing Schools* opens with a detailed description of a lockdown at Suburbia High, where students are scrutinized by dogs and military-style officers intent on eliminating drugs and out-of-control youth from the school. The narrative is engrossing and sets the stage for a discussion of schools as prison-like institutions, but the chapter eventually focuses on the issue of conflicts among students and between students and teachers. For example, Lyons and Drew describe how the SHS students sense of entitlement alienates some teachers, along with the ways students make each others' lives difficult based on perceived and real differences of sexuality, race, and class. These details matter, of course, but it is not always clear how these seemingly everyday conflicts advance a discussion of the ways schools are both subject to discipline from the state and authors of punishment in the name of the state. "Conflict," rather than "punishment" becomes the key word for much of this chapter, and, while the two concepts are related, the focus on who is punishing whom and for what purpose becomes unclear.

Similarly, in the chapter on *Pleasantville*, the authors powerfully link their analysis of Suburbia and Urban high schools to their reading of the film by suggesting a racial underpinning for the culture of fear promoted by state and schools (77-81). Lyons and Drew argue that the state and media portray poor Black youth as such great threats to society that urban schools become the locus of many of our fears. As a result, schools such as SHS consume themselves with distancing themselves from the images that have been generated of inner city youth, and such obsession results in zero tolerance forms of discipline for white middle class youth (who are, therefore, not taught to question power or to become critical citizens) and overwhelmingly punitive settings for urban schools. Such surveillance, according to Lyons and Drew, results in severely limited forms of agency for all students and impoverished notions of democracy in our schools and culture.

Lyons and Drew, however, have addressed so many variables by this point—from the fact that SHS students label those who do not fit in as "gay,"

to the SHS adults' fear of drugs in their school, to the way SHS is reminiscent of Columbine High School (which calls on very different images of violence than inner city violence), to the complex gender and sexual overtones of the film *Pleasantville*—that the nascent focus on race as a driving factor for our culture of fear is muted. Here and elsewhere, readers are left impressed by the variety of methods and analyses in *Punishing Schools* and by the overall argument even as we struggle to connect the ethnographic data, the readings of cultural texts, the history of a state educational school system and of two individual schools, and the multiple theoretical focuses employed by the authors.

As a reader, then, I sometimes want Lyons and Drew to pull the pieces of their analysis together more definitively, but I also see their study as significant because its analyses raise so many variables affecting public education today. Ultimately, one of the book's greatest strengths is that it challenges us to question how we can accumulate complex, multi-layered forms of data about education—the kind we need to understand our schools in an ethically responsible way—and tie this data together in persuasive arguments for multiple audiences: academics, the general public, politicians, and parents. If the various forces affecting education will never be subject to neat, comprehensive analyses, how will we get such disparate audiences to listen to our multi-layered arguments, when those espousing simple (if less helpful) solutions are more easily heard? Lyons and Drew have not resolved this issue, but their ability to provide provocative theoretical and historical analyses along with detailed observation and close readings of texts compels us to think hard about the power corporate and state interests maintain over schools and how difficult the battle to limit this power will be.

Chicago, IL

*Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie (解读英语饼): The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric* by LuMing Mao. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2006.

Reviewed by Hui Wu, University of Central Arkansas

LuMing Mao's *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric* is the first theoretical endeavor that conceptualizes Chinese American rhetoric as a living rhetoric, an endeavor liberating to a group of border residents—Chinese Americans. The last two decades have witnessed exhilarating development of studies of Chinese rhetoric, for example, the works of Mary Garrett, Xing Lu, Xiaoye You, and others. Interest-