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***Text* Review**

Now for the Genetically Modified PhD

review by Kevin Brophy

Courageous Research
Elaine Martin and Judith Booth (eds)
Melbourne: Common Ground & Victoria University 2003
ISBN 1 86335 534 0
pb 139pp RRP AU$24

In the March 2004 issue of the *Australian Book Review* Frank Bongiorno's letter to the editor addressed one perennial aspect of the puzzle of the PhD. He was alarmed that among non-fiction publications based on PhD theses, anything that seeks to move beyond anecdotage to argument and analysis becomes fair game for reviewers. He was writing in defence of Clare Wright's *Beyond the Ladies Lounge* (MUP 2003), a feminist study that adopts an academically ignored aspect of history, and takes it seriously. Wright's book began its life as a PhD thesis. In Aviva Tuffield's review (*ABR* Dec/Jan 2003-4), the significance and innovation of this social history are recognised, but the thesis-like aspects of the book (repetition of the main argument, intricacy of detail, piling up of evidence) are said to bog the reader down.

This mini-controversy in the pages of *ABR* is indicative of a continuing series of puzzles over why anyone would attempt a PhD, how a PhD can be shaped, and what to do with a PhD. For each of these troubling questions there is of course a solid traditional answer. But in the humanities and especially in the emerging field of creative arts, fewer students are producing traditional PhDs. It is possible to write a novel, a film script, a series of poems, paint pictures, take photographs, produce installations, sculptures or virtual events in digital media as parts of a PhD project. The inclusion of creative work in PhDs in Australian universities over the past decade is now beginning to mutate the PhD itself. Alongside the effects of this innovation (an accommodation to the demands of students that PhDs be truly meaningful and invigorating inquiries) are the continuing self-reflexive effects of the radical practices of feminism, race studies, gender studies, post-structural critique and other meta-critical practices.

No one writing a novel wants to produce a manuscript that reads more like an academic thesis than a publishable piece of fiction, but more and more young men and women writing novels want to write them in the context of a PhD project. Why is this the case, and how is it possible? The answers to 'why?' will, I expect, fill a number of PhD theses over the next hundred years. More immediately students and their institutions of learning are attempting to devise ways to do these new PhDs.

Courageous Research is both a resource book and a snapshot of the contemporary state of the PhD in the human sciences and the creative arts. There are eight chapters by eight students who have completed PhDs that are constructed against the grain.

The following examples of these chapters indicates the range of the collection of essays and reports. Doris Brett writes eloquently of the various strands of analytical, autobiographical and creative writing that contributed to her strangely-structured and later controversial book, *Eating the Underworld*. (Random House 2001). David Webb explores the possibility of including personal, spiritual and literary dimensions in a scientific inquiry into suicide. Deborah Wood, visual artist, writes with integrity and grit of her visual art as itself a painstakingly constructed argument. It is very often the relation between the creative and the analytical that becomes a source of trouble and anxiety in the production of the new, hybrid PhD. Wood quotes Bracha Lichtenburg Ettinger's observation: 'Painting produces theory and kernels that can transform it; theory does not alter painting in process; it can draw stalks out of it and translate them into its own language' (from *Inside the Visible*, edited by de Zegher, 1996). She uses this image of the stalk to locate her theoretical reflections on her work as she developed her 'art-practice based research method'. Tellingly, she concludes her discussion by noting, 'The challenges to traditional form in my thesis arose not out of a desire to be different but rather from the need to find a form that honoured and reflected my research practice'. This contribution is another example of the subtle and sophisticated manner in which artists are reclaiming the ground of theory as a basis and a product of their practice. And it is exciting to read an artist's engagement with theory in a way that is not possible when reading the theoretical output of critics who are not engaged in practice. Margaret Trail records the development of a PhD that investigates and performs the sounds of Australian Rules football. Like Clare Wright's book on women publicans, this PhD probes an unexplored but ubiquitous aspect of Australian social history. In addition it contributes to the growing area of aural or sound art. Russell Walsh dissipated most of his childhood in front of the television, but thanks to a lame joke delivered in an episode of *Robin Hood*, he is now conducting a PhD research project in the gay saunas of Melbourne. The project begins with Claude Lanzmann's nine-and-a-half hour documentary film, *Shoah*, which, though it does not reveal new information does produce an 'effect of knowledge' not achievable through books or data. This film serves as a methodological model for an inquiry into the performance that constitutes the gay sauna scene in Melbourne, and linked with this an examination of the PhD thesis as a naturalised performance.

The purpose of this book is displayed through its title and the image on the front cover - a diver launching from a cliff into the sea many hundreds of metres below. The message is that it requires some courage to persevere with a PhD that does not fit easily into the longstanding scholarly model, but nevertheless must prove itself rigorous and valid. Valerie Walkerdine concludes the collection with a vivid essay of reminiscence and argument, reminding us that a PhD can begin as a niggling feeling that something we have been told is not quite right. To listen to these intimations, articulate them, interrogate them and tease them out requires courage. This is a book full of ideas and inspiration for anyone contemplating setting out on a PhD that is a little risky.

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***Text* Review**

So You Want To Write a Screenplay?

review by Charlie Strachan

Writing Your Screenplay
Lisa Dethridge
Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2003
ISBN 1 74114 083 8
255 pages, Pb AU$35.00

The history of writing books about the art and craft of writing screenplays is almost as old as the history of the film production industry itself. The potential profit to be made from working within the burgeoning industry attracted a great many 'wanna-be' writers. The spawning of a secondary industry, writing and publishing texts about the craft, was inevitable.

I've been collecting titles in the field for the best part of thirty years and have found only a very few useful either as a teacher of screenwriting or in my individual practice as a screenwriter. Most simply regurgitate the same old reductive, formulaic information. Only the buzz phrases change. Worse, most are written in an evangelistic tone that suggests Hollywood, fame and fortune are only a few dot points or stepping stones away. Few acknowledge that the stepping stones aren't laid out in a line, they are stacked on top of each other, forming a bloody great wall against which hopes and aspirations of the budding screenwriter may be casually and brutally dashed.

It was therefore refreshing to read the opening pages of Lisa Dethridge's *Writing Your Screenplay* and discover a writer who treats both her topic and her reader with respect. The book is aimed at a broad and general readership, but the introduction, indeed the whole book, is carefully designed to make those who think screenplay writing is easy think again.

Specifically, the reader is invited to consider screenplay writing as creative practice. On the final page, Dethridge acknowledges, 'While the technical process of screenwriting can be sketched out in a book like this one, the real learning comes from doing' (239). This is not a 'how to' book, rather it is a workbook or practical guide.

Each chapter is accompanied by a set of practical exercises, none of which can be completed in five minutes. Indeed, these exercises could form the basis of years of creative endeavour. Refreshingly, completion of the exercises won't add up to a screenplay, rather the folio and journal the budding writer is encouraged to build could provide the working documents from which a screenplay may come. That alone makes this book stand out. It suggests that the process of writing a screenplay isn't product-driven, but idea-centred. The reader is encouraged to enter the (potential) world of their characters and story, to dwell within that world

and explore it exhaustively. As Dethridge writes, 'This book is designed to nurture your ideas for innovative cinema' (3).

Note the use of the term 'innovative cinema', rather than 'film' or 'movies'. Dethridge acknowledges that the potential screenwriters who may read this book are already influenced and conditioned by diverse narrative and screenstory-telling traditions. They are as likely to want to produce a screenplay that reflects the fragmented, fast-paced story worlds of *The Matrix* and *Run Lola Run* as they are to produce a more classically-structured screenstory. Dethridge encourages exploration in approach, but offers the sensible advice that, 'The more familiar the writer is with classic storytelling blueprints, the more likely they are to make successful departures from the norm' (3). Her text is designed to encourage her readers to investigate what kind of screenstory ideas might be most appropriate for them. She also gives strong focus to encouraging the reader to consider how the industry and potential audience might respond to a story idea. She makes it clear that while the process of screenwriting is in pursuit of production and exhibition, the process itself is a journey of creative and personal research. The focus is clearly on the personal development of the artist who feels they have something to share with an audience. The first two dot points (there had to be dot points) set the tone for the whole:

- What do you hope to achieve by writing for the screen?
- What do you hope to explore and understand as part of your research for the project? (6)

The opening chapter is a fine introduction to the delicate balancing act the screenwriter must perform to meet demands of art, industry, market and audience. It also looks at the basics of what makes for a good screenstory. Experienced screenwriters and teachers won't find much that's new here, but the exercises at the end of the chapter should prove valuable whatever level of experience the reader has.

Dethridge's second chapter has the sub-title, 'Know the rules before you start to break them' (40). Good advice, but so often this is where my heart begins to sink. Dot points are on the horizon. There are surprisingly few on show here. Instead, Dethridge offers an accessible and understandable overview of the screenplay as, 'a coded set of instructions that has a highly specific technical function' (43). I want my students to read this. The reader is also introduced to the 'Four Ps' (47). In my experience initialised lists usually herald the beginning of the buzz phrases, but again Dethridge avoids jargon. The Ps turn out to be those old favourites: protagonist; dramatic problem; plot; and premise. The terms are briefly defined and the rest of the book is essentially an exposition of their collective interrelationship, importance and complexity.

The following chapter on the psychology of the protagonist is familiar fare, but that is followed by two chapters that place focus on issues of time. These are the chapters I particularly want my students to read. I devote a good deal of my lecture and tutorial time to discussing how the ability to manage and manipulate Time is fundamental to the screenwriter's art and craft. Dethridge devotes some forty pages to a thorough examination of time as a basic issue in planning the chronology of a screenstory plot. Definitions of two separate, but indivisible time frames are offered, 'the time of the tale and the time of the telling' (79),

then focus is placed on the multiple challenges the screenwriter faces when planning the arrangement of on-screen events.

What I found most interesting in this section was that Dethridge manages to make references to both Aristotle and *The Matrix* accessible and relevant to a contemporary readership, who may not have heard of one and who may think the other is easy to reproduce. Her ability to relate discussions of ancient traditions and conventions of storytelling to contemporary screen practice is enviable. Discussions of Aristotle, Joseph Cambell, Joseph Egri and Robert McKee stand alongside discussions of the premises and story structures of *Sunset Boulevard*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Psycho*, *Basic Instinct*, *Thelma and Louise*, *The Matrix*, *Run Lola Run*, *Pulp Fiction*, and *Sliding Doors*.

Readers are encouraged to 'get to know the conventions that govern the unfolding of screen chronology and then exploit them or subvert them as you will' (119). Dethridge then places focus on the traditional three-act structure. Here she gives due credit to writers of other 'practical guides', Syd Field (*The Screenwriter's Workbook*, Dell Books, New York, 1984) and Linda Seger (*Making a Good Script Great*, Samuel French, Los Angeles, 1994) who have attempted 'to identify patterns and paradigms in the structure of the three act screenplay' (128). (It may be worth noting that the former has as an outcome a completed first draft screenplay, the latter is most useful if employed in the process of rewriting.) There is also an extended discussion of Christopher Vogler's contribution to the field (*The Writer's Journey: Mythic structure for storytellers and screenwriters*, Pan MacMillan, London, 1999). In essence, the second half of the book represents a comprehensive overview of thought regarding the traditional three-act structure.

Admittedly, there is no reference to Ken Dancynger and Jeff Rush's work in the area (*Alternative Scriptwriting: writing beyond the rules*, Focal Press/Butterworth-Heinemann, Boston, 1995), and I think that's a shame because I believe they have a great deal to offer those interested in innovative contemporary practice. There are other shortcomings. Dethridge makes reference to the fact that the information she offers applies to both short and feature films, but there is little focus on the writing of the short film, the area where most new screenwriters devote their energies. I also feel that while this book encourages the reading of screenplays and the keeping of a logbook of the screenplays read, it actually contains very few screenplay extracts. A few more, particularly in the chapter on dialogue and characterisation, would have been a useful addition.

Perhaps the scarcity of extracts has something to do with the fact that much of the material in this book forms part of the on-line course in Screenwriting run by the Australian Film, TV and Radio School (www.AFTRS.edu.au). On the basis of what I've read here, the course is certainly worth a look.

There is no substitute in the teaching of screenwriting for individual supervision and guidance from an experienced practitioner, but as an introductory text and overview *Writing Your Screenplay* stands out. Lisa Dethridge holds a PhD in Media Ecology from New York University and has extensive experience in both the USA and Australia teaching media/communications and as a writer and script editor for the screen. That experience shows. I will be recommending this book to students and colleagues.

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***Text* Review**

More than a Primer?

review by Glen Phillips

Explorations in Creative Writing
Kevin Brophy
Melbourne University Press, 2003
ISBN 0-522-85056-1
Pb 256pp, RRP AU$34.95

Certainly, this book raises many questions about its categorisation. Perhaps we needed a book for teachers (and students) in the fields of creative writing and English studies which is completely different from the frequently dull or largely unusable, over-individualised and idiosyncratic texts that have come onto the market over the years. It is true that Kevin Brophy's latest in his ever-lengthening list of published works is unconventional in form. Ever since his fabulous *Creativity* we have known that he is far more of an author than just a gifted writer of poetry and fiction.

Let's look at the structure of *Explorations in Creative Writing*. There are three main sections, viz, "Reading Writing', 'Making Writing' and 'Talking Writing'. That seems logical enough. Yet there is a sense that these are 'titles of convenience', since much of the fascinating content of any of the sections wouldn't really go amiss in one of the remaining sections. In fact, this very useful book is a delightful ragbag of often quite personal opinions, jottings, well-developed pieces of creative writing and competent, even scholarly, essays.

One of the abiding pre-occupations is the ambience of Melbourne - the City, its suburbs, its weather - even its dog turds. But don't be misled, the actual range of topics (though always linked somehow to the professions of writing and teaching writing) is huge - an apparent family anecdote (often used in much the same way that poet Andrew Lansdown uses his family as a touchstone to his lyrics) can lead to the question of literacy. We can move on to consider medieval thinking, then witness a challenge to Philip Adams, visit Fernado Pesson, go on to John Kinsella and find ourselves ending up with a vase of yellow tulips. We can be transported from Istanbul to Brunswick by turns.

I see that the work on Brophy's book was assisted by a publication grant from the University of Melbourne, and a good thing too. It seems that a number of Brophy's essays and papers well worthy of collecting into a book are hereby made available, together with many practical ideas for teaching (and learning) the craft of writing. Certainly, some of the arguments border on the jesuitical, but it's all pretty stimulating. You'd have to be tough to please if you couldn't find enlightenment and a chuckle or two in this engaging book.

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***Text* Review**

"This book exercised some type of hypnotical [sic] powers over my descriptive-starved [sic] brain"

review by Julienne van Loon

Word Painting: A Guide to Writing More Descriptively
Rebecca McClanahan
Cincinatti, Ohio: Writer's Digest Books, 1999
ISBN 1-58297-025-4
249 pages, Pb.RRP AU$32.95

Greg Dening, in his *Readings/Writings* describes the rare and ecstatic moments in reading when

> I realise that what I am reading is just what I was about to say. It is a moment of jealousy and disappointment, as if the occasion had been stolen from me, but it is a moment of excitement too - because I think I would like to try and say it better, because now the monologue in my mind has become a dialogue. My immediate impulse is to write something, anything… (xix)

Is it possible to come across such a moment in a guidebook for writers? It should be, shouldn't it?

If, as Ross Chambers would have it, it is the agreement between reader and writer that determines the relevance of a text, then I have to confess to the relationship between myself and Rebecca McClanahan, mediated by *Word Painting: A Guide to Writing More Descriptively*, having gone awry. As I carry out the dual processes of reading and writing that are involved in putting together this review, I am conscious that I am not the ideal reader/writer for this particular guide. This is a shame, because I feel McClanahan's book, given what it manages to do within the predicament of its genre, probably deserves a good review.

Etymologically, the word 'guide' is related to the Old Provencal *guida*, of Germanic origin, and akin to the English *wltan* to look after, and *witan*, to know (Meriam Webster Online Dictionary). It is commonly accepted in Western culture that intellectual knowledge is easily translated into the form of a book. But how can a guidebook really *look after* its readers? The teacher who guides students in the classroom has the privilege of being able to carry out some quick investigations to find out where their students are coming from, and the students are 'looked after' accordingly. But the writer of a guidebook on writing has a double quandary. S/he has to intuit not only how much the reader already knows about reading and writing, but also what kind of thing it is that the reader has in mind to write. No wonder guidebooks for writers have such a woeful reputation. Their task is an impossible one.

McClanahan and I get off to a bad start when she frames her book using John Gardner's idea of the fictional dream without questioning what it might mean for a writer to want to reinforce such a dream. Gardner's fictional dream is basically about suspending disbelief and it reminds me how all-pervasive American realism has been and continues to be in contemporary film and fiction. Significantly, McClanahan is most well known as a writer of creative non-fiction and it makes me wonder what the connection is between contemporary realism (hysterical realism, as James Wood has called the worst of it) in fiction, and the rise of the creative non-fiction genre. McClanahan is not at all self-reflexive about the kind of writing she really has in mind for her reader, except to say that as a writer, she herself seeks to describe "the kind of dream a reader would willingly enter" (3). Perhaps I am being too academic here, given the presumably general readership *Word Painting* is aimed at, but McLanahan's transferal of Gardner's concept of the fictional dream verbatim, without ever critically unpacking for the reader what it might mean, rings warning bells for me.

McClanahan's book is, ultimately, a series of essays on descriptive work, with some suggested exercises at the end of each chapter. Patrick West, in reviewing Irina Dunn's *The Writer's Guide* (Allen and Unwin 2000) for an earlier edition of *TEXT*, laments that Dunn's 'guide' lacks the voice of a teacher, and McClanahan's book could not be faulted for the same. Her voice is direct and graceful and her presence in the text can seem intimate at times. Significantly, it was McClanahan's reputation as a teacher that drew me to her book. She has been teaching creative writing in the U.S. for twenty-five years and in New York, where she lives, she has received the Governor's Award for Education.

When I attended the Kenyon Review Fiction Workshop in the United States last year, there were workshops in other specializations running concurrently, and down the hall from my own group, Rebecca McClanahan was teaching creative non-fiction. "She's amazing," commented a woman in my own workshop group, who had attended one of McClanahan's workshops previously. And when I listened to McClanahan's students read from their works-in-progress one evening, it was clear that the work coming out of her class was extraordinarily good.

The closest I came to Dening's moment of excitement, in reading *Word Painting*, was in considering some of the outstanding examples of descriptive work by others that McClanahan incorporates into her text. She takes extracts from classic and contemporary writers and poets, including Virginia Woolf and Toni Morrison. But my favourites were her less predictable examples, some of which she has gleaned from children she has taught. She quotes a fourth grader named Tammy who in trying to describe the colour silver, writes "it smells like sparkling gases" and "tastes like a mouthful of bees" (78). A particularly concise and elegant passage of descriptive work comes from a fellow essayist:

> Flour swirled in a slant of light and lined the creases of the baker's neck, salting his hair. He doused the work table with flour and kneaded the dough until it felt soft as an ear lobe, then cut pieces off the mass and balanced them on the enamel scale. He flattened the pieces with the palm of his hand to make thin disks, which he slipped into the oven. In the intense heat of the fires the loaves puffed up, hollow in the centre. Once out of the ovens they collapsed

> as they cooled, and he wrapped the bread in towels or muslin to keep it soft enough to fold around an olive or fresh cheese or a slice of cooked lamb (Jane Brox, "Bread," qtd. in McClanahan, 39).

What makes for *good* description is, of course, culturally determined. Unfortunately, the finer points of this fact are overlooked in McClanahan's book. She frames her preliminary discussion of effective description by referring (rather predictably) to Aristotle: the writer needs to use careful wording, sensory detail, "expressions that represent things in a state of activity" and well-chosen figurative language. McClanahan warns, quite rightly, that a description can do all these things and still not be effective. "We cannot conclude it is effective until we see how it affects the total piece of writing" (10). She divides the book into three sections accordingly, titling them 'eye', 'word' and 'story'. The first section works on sharpening sensory perception, the second on writing with clarity and accuracy, and the third on using description as a unifying force in a piece of writing as a whole. As long as the kind of writing the reader has in mind 'fits' with Aristotle's focus on mimesis, and by extension with Gardner's and McClanahan's version of the fictional dream, then this is a logically structured book with some useful things to say about writing more descriptively. McClanahan also draws on advice from a well-known stable of Americans, including Flannery O'Connor and Janet Burroway. For a reader not already familiar with these names, the collected advice is probably useful. I found it sadly uninspiring and highly conventional. I was not seduced.

Conscious that I was possibly a ring-in, an inauthentic reader, not 'general' enough, the question of audience kept niggling at the back of my mind as I read McClanahan's guide. And so, interested in what other readers might think, I conducted a preliminary search on a few literary databases to see how other reviewers had handled *Word Painting*. The search revealed a disturbing silence. It seems that nobody had thought enough about the book to write anything like a critical review. Perhaps this is not unusual for a Writers Digest imprint. Perhaps, again, this is a problem with genre. I turned instead to the Amazon.com site to see what kinds of "Spotlight Reviews" the perhaps more authentically 'general' reader might have written. The list I found there was revealing. There is a glowing testimonial from one reader whose copy of the book is apparently "dog-eared and full of highlighted notations" and who feels that the book is a "must-have for anyone who writes anything." There is another reader who didn't like the essay approach, lamenting that the book is "rambling" and that it is "hard to pick out key points" in a book that's basically "nearly 250 pages" of "random observations." This latter reader felt the essay approach defied the instructional genre, which apparently should be easier to navigate and far more concise. One of the most outrageous and amusing comments came from someone who purported to be not the least bit interested in writing and who has no intentions of becoming a writer: "[I] read this book while making my daily train commute to work. I found myself bursting out in laughter several times, attracting the stares of fellow commuters as if I had added some type of hallucinogenic drugs [sic] in my coffee. On three occasions, I was so involved in the book that I missed my station stop. This book exercised some type of hypnotical [sic] powers over my descriptive-starved [sic] brain." This particular reader's experience clearly contains moments of excitement, but whether they have been productive moments, in Dening's sense, remains uncertain.

My sojourn on the amazon.com site simply re-affirmed my suspicion: here-in lies a very troublesome genre that carries with it an equally troublesome notion of who its audience might be. The combination of trying to *look after* and provide *knowledge* to a stranger makes the possibility for agreement between reader and writer all too much of a hit-and-miss affair. I was not completely surprised by the non-writerly reader who was thoroughly seduced by McClanahan's prose. There are sections of *Word Painting* that read exceptionally well. She uses a lot of personal anecdotes - a particularly memorable one is used in an early chapter where McClanahan relates the story of her sister's loss of sight after the birth of her second child. The impact of this loss on both the family and the individual is revealed here, along with their reactions when it is discovered that the blindness is only temporary. Frequently such anecdotes are not only interesting to read, but are well-contextualised, in this case introducing a chapter titled "The Eye of the Beholder." McClanahan is clearly a skilled writer, and some of her most recent essays, included in *Best American Essays 2001* and in *The Fourth Genre: Contemporary Writers on/of Creative Nonfiction*, exemplify this. Her poetry - and she has published four volumes - is also critically acclaimed.

One could argue that to provide a thorough review of an instructional book on writing, one should sit down and follow the instructions. I haven't. What I have done is read McClanahan's book as a teacher, with an eye toward drawing out useful tidbits for using in the classroom with undergraduates. It seems to me that the usefulness of *Word Painting* for teachers of creative writing in a university setting is limited. It has little of the easy sophistication of Jack Hodgins's *A Passion for Narrative*, and it lacks the practical text-book nature of Janet Burroway's *Writing Fiction*. Having read it, it is quite likely I will go back to it at a later date looking to use one or two of McClanahan's examples or exercises for teaching purposes, but I doubt my copy will develop the dog-eared, much highlighted status of another reader's. The book is meant to be relevant to writers across poetry, fiction and non-fiction and I think that whilst this is the case, its generalist approach is also one of its weaker points. I would recommend the early chapter titled "The Eye of the Beholder" to both teachers and students of writing, but the later chapters fail to engage with the same sense of ease, particularly as the use of second-person point-of-view increases to the point of excess. Perhaps the key problem with *Word Painting*, for this reader, remains its uneasy genre (and by extension, its problematic relationship with its audience). I get the sense that McClanahan would be an outstanding teacher in a face-to-face situation. But unable as she is here to really get to know her readers, her ability to *teach* is severely hampered. It's a bit like listening to a pre-recorded guide through headsets on the way round a museum. The gap between guide and visitor is so wide that after a while you feel less and less inclined to listen. Funnily enough, one consequence of my reading McClanahan's book has been that it has forced me to think (again) about my own assumptions when I teach writing. Am I assuming too much about my students? Does my approach necessarily prevent certain types of writing from flourishing? I don't think these are the kinds of questions McClanahan set out to get her reader thinking about. But readers, as we know, rarely respond in a predictable manner. Part of me remains a little envious of that non-writer who kept missing her stop, even if it did make her late for work.

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