



BOOK

Review of *Reign of Error: The Hoax of the Privatization Movement and the Danger to America's Public Schools*



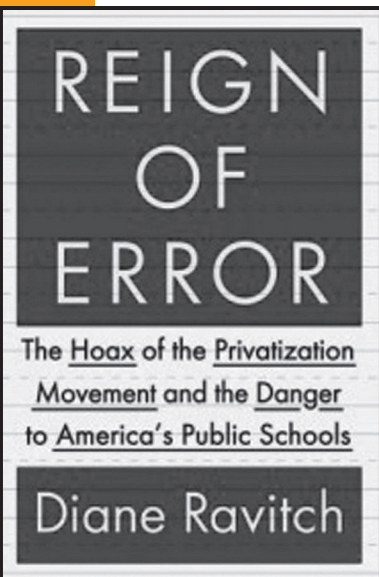
by Diane Ravitch, Vintage Press, 2014

If you've been teaching for a decade or more, you probably have had this little nagging voice in the back of your head that teachers no longer seem to be held in even the middle-level esteem we used to be. High profile documentaries like *Waiting for Superman*, union busting moves around the country, and government policies designed to connect teachers' evaluations to student performance on standardized tests have all had a demoralizing effect on our profession. And in case you thought that these were part of just a typical pendulum swing, Diane Ravitch's most recent book, *Reign of Error* (2014), makes it clear that all of these moves are part of a deliberate, organized, and well-funded effort by the school privatization movement to make public schools appear broken. By tracking years of data on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), Ravitch convincingly points out, that despite all the rhetoric and hand wringing of politicians and policy makers, scores on reading and math have been steadily rising and that we currently have the highest graduation rates in US history.

Ravitch's voice, because of her own decades-long association with the accountability movement she has turned so vehemently against, is the perfect one to take on the usual suspects—Bill Gates, Teach for America, Michelle Rhee, Arne Duncan, Joel Klein, and others—who are adding fuel to the growing privatization fire at the expense of the public schools. While she spends over three-quarters of this highly readable book identifying the problem and connecting the dots, the solutions she proposes are mostly at the 10,000-foot level and out of most teachers' reach: strengthening the teaching profession with higher entry standards, addressing the re-segregation of many of America's schools, and raising the standard of living of our country's poor.

As a classroom teacher often called out at dinner parties and family gatherings to defend the "woeful" state of American education, I appreciate Ravitch's support, but she too, like so many would-be reformers, fails to recognize what David Kirp recently pointed out in a *New York Times* editorial called "Teaching is Not a Business"—it is "impossible to improve education by doing an end run around inherently complicated and messy human relationships." Only classroom teachers, who are working every day with their students, are the ones with the knowledge, relationships, and credibility to bring about true reform. Fortunately, I read Ravitch with a book group of teachers, and over a beverage or two, we remembered that we are not alone in this impossible job of ours, reminding ourselves of our individual and collective commitment to public education for all.

Reviewed by John Golden
Cleveland High School, Portland, Oregon



R E V I E W

OREGON COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
OC TE Chalkboard
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Chalkboard is the newsletter of the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, an organization that has existed for 100 years to support teachers of English and the language arts in Oregon elementary and secondary schools, community colleges and universities.

Chalkboard is our way of keeping our many members and friends informed about OC TE activities, programs of the National Council of Teachers of English, conferences and learning opportunities for students, research tidbits, book recommendations, and more.

Chalkboard is a member of the NCTE Information Exchange.

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OC TE Fall Conference October 4, 2014 ~ Wilsonville



Brian Doyle, STORIES SAVE LIVES Brian Doyle on Brian Doyle with an Introductory Assist from Your Editor

Do you want to know Brian Doyle as a storyteller? Here is a potent mix: Start with the humor and forthrightness of Sherman Alexie, add Thomas Merton's questing, William Stafford's conscience, and end with the once-upon-a-great-notion, epic Merry Pranksterism of Ken Kesey. How could you not come to Wilsonville to hear all that zany wisdom and Northwest spirit in one fell swoop? Now, read what Brian wants you to know:

Brian Doyle is all the usual things you would expect him to be when he mumbles and chants at the OC TE conference—he's written many books of fiction and essays and poems, and he's won this award and that award for his work, including the Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the way cooler Oregon Coast Literature Award, *which is chosen by the students at Seaside High!* But you never heard a guy more convinced that stories *matter*, stories save lives, stories are crucial holy wild food, stories are the slender pillars on which we build lives and countries and the astonishing future, stories are how we hold hands and fend off greed and violence and the murder of memory, stories are how kids tiptoe out from behind their brokenness and fears and masks toward who they might amazingly be; and it is this latter conviction, which he will thrash toward expressing. And maybe he'll talk about basketball and hawks if we have time.

President's Letter



Greetings and welcome to a new school year!

I hope you are rested, refreshed, and eager. I have checked my class lists and look forward to meeting the smiling kids already met in school photos. I can't wait to pair each with just the right books to ignite a passion for reading.

As you plan your year, please mark your calendar for our annual **Fall Conference** on Saturday, **October 4**, at Wilsonville High School. It is coming up **soon** and is the best professional development around. Twenty-two presentations for all grade levels, K-16, AND you'll get to hear from **Oregon Spirit Book Award winning authors** Susan Fletcher, April Henry, Cat Winters, Deborah Hopkinson, Chris Bolton, H. Joseph Hopkins, and Elizabeth Rusch. If that weren't enough—**continental breakfast and lunch are included**, you'll get **one of the award-winning books free**, and you'll hear **keynoter Brian Doyle**, the much-decorated essayist, novelist (don't miss the fabulous *Mink River*), and editor whose work has appeared in *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *American Scholar*, *Commonweal*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Newsday* and many more publications.

I'm proud of our organization and all we accomplished last year during our centennial celebration. We are teachers like you who love teaching and value literacy, and we couldn't do what we do without your support. **Here's to a fabulous year!**

Karen K. Johnson, President

OREGON COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH 2014 Fall Conference • Saturday, October 4

WILSONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL • 6800 SW WILSONVILLE RD. • WILSONVILLE, OREGON



PRE-REGISTRATION FORM
Pre-registration deadline: September 23, 2014

You may register on-line at
oc te.org

Name _____ Street Address _____
 City _____ State/Zip _____
 Phone _____ School _____
 E-Mail address(es) _____

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION ~ INCLUDES MEALS

	Number	Amount
Non-OC TE member	\$105	_____
OC TE member	\$75	_____
Full-time student/retiree	\$45	_____
Total		\$ _____

On-site registration will be \$115 for everyone.
A group pre-registration for 5 or more OC TE members is available at \$60 each.
Must request a group form by email oc teorg@gmail.com. Pre-registration deadline: September 23, 2014.
For information see oc te.org
Make checks payable to **OC TE** and send to: Barbara Wiegele
14867 SE Orchid Avenue • Milwaukie OR 97267-2454

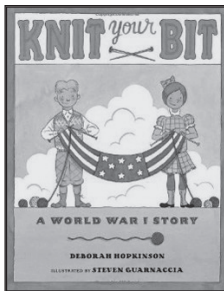
Conference Schedule:
7:30 a.m. - Registration/Free Book/
Continental Breakfast/Exhibits
8:20 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions
9:30 a.m. - Concurrent Sessions
10:40 a.m. - General Session, Brian Doyle
11:30 a.m. - General Session, OSBA Authors
12:10 p.m. - Lunch/Autographing/Exhibits
1:20 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions
2:30 p.m. - Concurrent Sessions

Join us on Facebook!
This is the fastest way to stay in touch and see what the English community is doing across the state. "Like" us and share with a friend!

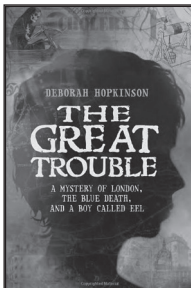
OREGON SPIRIT BOOK AWARD 2013 WINNERS



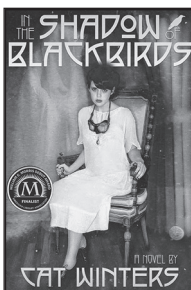
OCTE is pleased to announce the winners of the 2013 Oregon Spirit Book Award. This award is given yearly to the author of a distinguished contribution to picture books, middle reader, young adult, graphic novels or non-fiction literature that engages and encourages readers' imagination, discovery, and understanding, reflecting the spirit and values held by Oregonians. Awards to be given at our fall 2014 conference include:



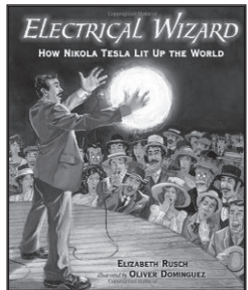
Picture Book Winner: *Knit Your Bit: A World War I Story*, by Deborah Hopkinson;
Honor: *Little Red Hot*, by Eric Kimmel.



Middle Reader Winner: *The Great Trouble: A Mystery of London, the Blue Death, & a Boy Called Eel*, by Deborah Hopkinson; **Honor:** *Falcon in the Glass*, by Susan Fletcher.



Young Adult Winner: *In the Shadow of Blackbirds*, by Cat Winters;
Honor: *The Girl Who Was Supposed to Die*, by April Henry and *Poison*, by Bridget Zinn.



Non-Fiction Winner: *Electrical Wizard: How Nikola Tesla Lit Up the World*, by Elizabeth Rusch; **Honor:** *The Tree Lady: The True Story of How One Tree-Loving Woman Changed a City Forever*, by H. Joseph Hopkins

Graphic Novels Winner: *SMASH: Trial by Fire*, by Chris A. Bolton.

Using Literary Debate to Encourage Deeper Reading

To reinvigorate student interest in literary analysis beyond the traditional essay, our 8th grade language arts team at Lake Oswego Junior High asks students to read a novel for the purpose of debate. To begin this unit, small groups of students select a thematic topic to investigate while reading Steinbeck's *The Pearl*. The topics support a deep understanding of the text and range in difficulty. For example, one group explores the theme: *Struggling against "the system" does more harm than good*. Another investigates: *Pursuing dreams is destructive*. As the class studies the novel, students collect quotations to both support and counter their assigned statement in an evidence journal. After finishing *The Pearl*, groups draw straws either to defend or counter their statement. Using gathered evidence, each group collaborates in presenting its strongest arguments, then rebuttals, against the opposition in a formal debate.

The debate as an activity encourages a deep reading of text and functions as an alternative to an essay. It provides an authentic learning opportunity, differentiates instruction, encourages student collaboration, and helps clarify the role evidence plays in a close reading of text, thereby practicing multiple strands of the Common Core.

Students become passionate about positions, furiously defending their reading of the text. Even disengaged students pore over the text with critical eyes to aid their team in what becomes a fierce competition. The debates transform our classrooms into centers of loud, lively discussions of literature—every language arts teacher's dream!

Kelly Fitzsimmons and Meagan Wright
Eighth Grade Teachers, Lake Oswego Junior High School

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS *Oregon English Journal*, Spring 2015

We invite you to submit articles and practical teaching ideas for the spring 2015 issue devoted to:

"Using Oregon Literature in the Classroom"

Manuscript submission deadline: February 1, 2015
For details, visit our website: octe.org

READING / LANGUAGE ARTS CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Brian Doyle, University of Portland Award-Winning Essayist, Poet, and Novelist:
Stories Save Lives

OCTOBER 4, 2014 ~ WILSONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
WORKSHOPS FOR ALL AGES, STAGES, AND INTERESTS!!!



Among the Presenters:

Laurie Dougherty,
Seaside Elementary
Teacher



"CCSS for Elementary Teachers:
Creating Conditions for
Student Success," K-5

Douglas Robertson,
Table Rock Elementary
Teacher



"Discovering Seuss," K-8

Mariko Walsh,
Scio High School
English Teacher



"Using CCSS in Standards-Based
Grading," 9-12

Brynna Hurwitz,
Lewis and Clark
College



"Am I Editing Out the Voices
of My Students?" 6-12

Kimberly Campbell,
Lewis and Clark
College



"New Teacher Panel:
Joys and Challenges of a Beginning Language Arts Teacher,"
General Audience

Desmond Spann,
Franklin High School
Language Arts Teacher



"Emcee Mind: Rap Instruction
in the Classroom," 6-12

Deborah Hopkinson,
OSBA Award-Winning
Author



"Using Text Sets and Historical
Thinking Principles to Support
Common Core Skills," K-12

Brieanna Wilson,
Liberty High School
Language Arts Teacher



"Honors and Equity for All," 9-12

Karen Johnson,
(and New Teachers)
Twality Middle School
Teacher



Keri Archer,
Arleta Elementary
Kindergarten Teacher



"Amazing Informational Writing
in Kindergarten," K-5

Justin Wilson Gabor,
Gervais High School



"Re-Framing Literacy and Language
for Struggling LA Students," 6-12

Allison Winningstad,
Oregon City Service
Learning Academy
Language Arts Teacher



"Poetry, Nonfiction
and Ricochet River," 9-12

Margaret Perrow,
Southern Oregon
University



"The Grammar-Writing Connection,"
General Audience

Jan Priddy,
Seaside High School
English Teacher



"Teach Writing Without
Making Your Eyes Bleed," 9-12

Eric Holmes,
Portland State,
Oregon Institute of
Technology Instructor



"Strategies for Teaching Interviewing
as a Research Methodology,"
General Audience

Meet and Hear Oregon Spirit Book Awards Authors...

SUSAN FLETCHER, APRIL HENRY, CAT WINTERS, DEBORAH HOPKINSON, CHRIS BOLTON, H. JOSEPH HOPKINS, AND ELIZABETH RUSCH

Lea Mathieu,
Ione High School
Language Arts Teacher



"Teaching Novel Structure with
the Hero's Journey," 6-12

Ben Bleckley,
St Helens High School
English Teacher



"Student Choice: Using Book Clubs to
Increase Reading Skill
and Motivation," 9-12

Paul Gregorio,
Portland
Community College



"Using Text-Sets of Picture Books to
Create Connections," K-5
and
"Update on Children's and Young
Adult Literature," K-12

Jerry Stevens,
Teacher Trainer,
Time to Teach!



"Take the POWER out of Power
Struggle and Put the CLASS Back In
Your Classroom," K-12

Amy Curtis,
Instructional
Coordinator, Twality
Middle School



"Strategic Differentiation," 6-12



...and get your books autographed!