and political implications of her historical analyses for the work we perform in contemporary writing and rhetoric classrooms, this text represents a comprehensive bibliographic contribution to the history of rhetoric. Miller combines primary sources with current analyses of those sources; employs historical studies composed by contemporary scholars in Philosophy, Linguistics, Cultural Studies, Speech, Literature, Education, Rhetoric, and Composition; and examines a variety of genres, including drama, poetry, letters, novels, dictionaries, and handbooks to work against a “singular conceptual rhetoric” (37) in favor of analyses that consider instead how “discourse is produced and deployed in multiple circumstances” (6).

Miller’s work should be read alongside traditional histories that place the origin of rhetoric in ancient Greece as well as those that examine rhetoric in more inclusive, global traditions. While it may be tempting to fault Miller’s text for her almost exclusive focus on the Western traditions of rhetoric, Trust in Texts provides the historiographic and theoretical support for conceiving of rhetoric as a “multiplicity of metadiscursive pedagogies that constitute cultures” and for understanding how those pedagogies are culturally-situated and autonomous rather than simply movements toward or away from an Athenian rhetorical tradition (106).

Rochester, Michigan


Reviewed by Michelle F. Eble, East Carolina University

As a Director of Undergraduate Studies in a Department of English that includes most, if not all, of the areas of study falling under the nebulous term English Studies, I especially looked forward to reading and reviewing this work. At the same time, I was skeptical that an edited collection on the topic of English Studies could hold together under analysis given the varied uses of the term to define a group of similar disciplines under one umbrella, a group of different sub-disciplines that all fall within the same department, or a group of scholars concerned with “how texts are made, how they mean, and why they matter” (Hesse 253). In perusing the table of contents, I wasn’t convinced that I would recognize a common thread that brought these chapters together. Much like English departments at various schools, I wondered if the chapters in the collection would build on similar ideas about what constitutes English Studies in the same way that
some people wonder how areas of study that seem so disparate can coexist together productively in one department called English.

As I read through the introduction, I was excited to see the approaches and arguments offered for transforming English Studies and this collection serves as a productive and thoughtful alternative to the “crisis and preservation narratives” common in English Studies scholarship that focus on disciplinary critique. In an effort to promote transformation, Lori Ostergaard, Jeff Ludwig, and Jim Nugent have pulled together voices from the various areas that make up English Studies. In addition to brief introductions to the four sections of the collection, the introduction identifies the predominate types of disciplinary critique as preservationist—those that hearken back to “the way it used to be” or transformative ones which emphasize growth, change, and opportunity for dialogue. The editors identify the chapters in the collection as examples of transformative responses to discipline inquiry and assert that one of the common themes of transformative responses is the future rather than the past. Transformative responses also focus on opportunity and collaboration while preservationist responses tend to focus on crisis and difference. Perhaps one of the most important components of a transformative response, and a focus of many of the pieces in this collection, is the emphasis on dialogue between and within the areas that make up English Studies and the acknowledgment of our differences but a focus on our similarities.

The introduction provides a framework for reading the diverse voices of the collection, and the individual chapters focus on specific instances of change, reform, negotiation, dialogue, collaboration, and common goals. This collection provides a hopeful outlook for English Studies, and its chapters illustrate ways to emphasize the dialogue needed for transformation. The collection is divided into 4 sections, with 3 chapters per section. Part I of the collection includes chapters that discuss negotiation and collaboration. In the first chapter of this part, Chris W. Gallagher, Peter M. Gray, and Shari J. Stenberg, graduates of SUNY-Albany’s “fusion-based” PhD program (the program at the center of North’s Refiguring the PhD in English Studies), discuss their experiences attempting to negotiate and navigate change at their new institutions once they received their PhDs. Given their experiences, they conclude that those wanting to refigure the discipline should take advantage of changes already happening, make “productive use of con/fusing moments”, and realize the importance of “relational work” to institutional and disciplinary change (40-41). The second chapter uses the metaphor of sociolinguistics as a way to think about the future of English Studies as Susan Burt asserts that “our disciplines, like our languages and our selves, are transformed through use, contact, and interaction” (51). The last chapter in this section of the text chronicles Caren J. Town, a faculty member in a department of Literature and Philosophy, and her efforts to collaborate with her colleagues in Education and Writing and Linguistics.
to educate future language arts teachers. She compares this collaborative experience to “climbing switchbacks up a mountain” where you keep climbing knowing that you are making some progress even if you don’t see the end of the climb in sight (53).

The three chapters in part II of the collection, labeled Disciplinary Enactment, discuss how performances are usually based on the value they hold within our departments even if these enactments may not be in the best interests of our discipline, our students, and our programs. David Downing uses two historical case studies to illustrate how we have been “disciplined” to separate reading and writing in our curriculum and our scholarship. However, any transformation in English Studies must begin with integrating “writing and reading activities,” valuing all of the scholarly practices conducted within English departments, and negotiating evaluation and labor practices. With the proliferation of independent writing programs, a chapter that adamantly argues against separating Writing Studies from English Studies seems rare, yet William Banks asserts that dividing large departments into smaller organizational units doesn’t always speak to disciplinary concerns as much as it does to relations between people within departments. Citing two examples, he illustrates the kinds of transformative and productive work that might happen in an English Studies department that spends time developing relationships and communication focused on “identification” and “articulation” (112). This section concludes with Matthew Abraham’s chapter which questions the use of theory—“as a reflection on practice”—in identifying administrative work as intellectual work and argues instead that the use of theory should disrupt and challenge the dominant culture. All three chapters make strong arguments for the discipline’s focus on relationships and the disproportionate values institutions place on different types of work within departments.

The third part of the collection focuses on curricula models that might serve to bring together the diverse work of English studies. Marcia A. McDonald’s chapter argues for an integrated English Studies curriculum based on dialogue between “the aesthetic and critical, the rhetorical and cultural” and the “education for democracy,” which emphasizes diversity, pragmatism, and civic engagement. Lynée Lewis Gaillet’s chapter provides an eighteenth-century historical precedent for “bridging the gap” between Composition and Literature and argues that historical models that integrated the work of civic humanism, reception and production of belles lettres, and writing serve as examples of what may be possible if we focus on similarities shared by those who make up English Studies. In the last chapter in this section, Matthew T. Pifer responds to the many crisis narratives regarding employment opportunities and the education of future PhDs in English by articulating a “theory of the generalist” based on aligning graduate student
preparation with their ultimate professional identity and practice in a wide variety of institutions.

The final part of the collection includes English Studies proposals that focus on writing, literacy, and technology. In Michael Pennell’s chapter, he explores what it might mean for English Studies if we engage corruption or “the ceasing to be” and the “non-places—spaces of movement and exchange and excess” to argue taking advantage of opportunities for change and transformation. In “English Teachers We Have Known,” Christopher Schroeder combines brief personal narratives with an alternative discussion to the “cries of literacy crisis” while focusing on a literacy model that may help English teachers remain relevant. Knievel argues in the concluding chapter of the collection for the central role technology can play in continuing to transform English studies. In perhaps one of the boldest chapters (the other by Banks) in the collection, he concludes that the discipline of English studies is dependent on a productive, active “inseparable relationship between technology and the humanities” in the twenty-first century.

A forward by Gary A. Olson and an afterward by Douglas Hesse affirm the importance of this collection to the future of English Studies, endorse dialogues related to the evolving nature of English Studies, and support the common thread throughout the collection that focuses on an appreciation of the similarities as well as the differences between the areas of study that make up English Studies. I was impressed with the excellent job the editors did in contextualizing this work, building on North’s work while at the same time encouraging possibilities for discussion and opportunity for dialogue. Most importantly, the chapters worked extremely well together in articulating the possibilities for transforming English Studies. The term “English Studies” still presents problems in that it means different things to different people, but this collection presents an operationalized definition. Thus, the collection also helps codify English Studies while also presenting ways for it to continually evolve. Together, the pieces in the collection paint a picture of English Studies as we approach the second decade of the 21st century. This collection argues for English Studies, and the impression that more and more independent rhetoric and writing programs and departments will form in the future seems less likely. The collection overwhelmingly asserts that specialists in the areas of study that make up English Studies should collaborate, listen, and negotiate with each other. Tending to relationships rather than going to our separate corners seems the more hopeful and productive path to a more relevant, legitimate English Studies and reading this collection is a place to begin this important work.

**Greenville, North Carolina**