

# Performance and Cure: Drama and Healing in Ancient Greece and Contemporary America (Classical Inter/Faces)

Karelisa V. Hartigan

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In this fascinating addition to the "Classical Inter/faces" series, Karelisa Hartigan suggests that drama was regularly performed in the theatres built within or adjacent to the ancient sanctuaries of Asklepios. She argues that a pageant which showed the enactment of the god healing prompted the dream therapy the patient experienced at the sanctuary. Patients who viewed this drama were ready to receive the nightly ministrations of the deity, his attendants and his animals while they slept in the dormitory at the Asklepieion. To support her thesis, Hartigan discusses the mind-body relationship in the healing process, a relationship the medical profession is beginning to recognize. She concludes by presenting first-hand material based on her experience doing Playback Theatre for patients at Shands Hospital at the University of Florida. In performing improvisational scenes at bedside or in a community space, she has witnessed how the minidramas lift the patients' spirits and offer them hope for a successful outcome to their illness.



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