

Editor's Introduction

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Well, this is it. My last introduction as editor. Soon it will be time to pass the editor's baton to our incoming co-editors, Laurie Grobman and Deborah Mutnick. I wish them well, and I look forward to working with them during this transition stage until Fall 2017. I have many deserving thanks to give in this rather lengthy paragraph, but I hope it will show the many folks who play a part in this journal. I want to first thank my editorial team. Willma Harvey, our Associate Editor, has a special gift for copyediting, and authors have thanked her over the years for the care she took in carefully editing their work. She also worked diligently to learn how to navigate the backside of our website and keep us running with many updates. We had a few conversations along the way about racial and social justice—conversations that sometimes were personal with our POC identities and influenced the vision path of this journal. Some have said I may be the first Latina managing editor of a predominantly Rhetoric and Composition

journal. If it's true and maybe it is, the path as a perceived first is never an easy one. I also have a disability, but it's taught me to persevere through obstacles. I want to thank Jessica Pauszek for her work with our social media, specifically facebook and twitter. While I was more comfortable with face-to-face interactions, she knew exactly where to take this journal's visibility with social media. She taught me how to take a mostly print journal and bring it alive via social media through contributor social media participation. It was wonderful to see authors' videos and audios about their articles or some related aspect. A community engagement journal isn't really engaged without a strong social media presence these days, and I hope it continues and reaches new heights in the future. I want to thank Tobi Jacobi for her work as book review editor. I was amazed at the number of reviewers she found and the quality of the reviews. When we had special issues, she always found reviews that blended in nicely with the article conversations. She understood our vision for the journal, and we were able to give voice to many diverse books and reviewers. I wish to thank the reviewers over the years for their generous time and detailed reviews. I also want to thank a number of people who didn't review manuscripts but who advised me on who would be best to review particular submissions. It takes a village in the review process. To the authors, I was so pleased with your work and the revisions you willingly made to make the articles rigorous, reflective, and reader-friendly. Although I wasn't so engaged with the Board, a number of board members reached out to me and provided suggestions and feedback over the years. Thank you for your input. Steve Parks, as the previous editor, was always there if I needed advice and was very generous in adopting *Reflections* under New City Community Press. A number of you worked to build the institutional subscription base and/or continued to subscribe to the journal. Thank you for your support. Elizabeth Parks was instrumental in designing our beautiful and meaningful covers over the years and ensuring our issues were well designed. I thank her for her work over the years. Thank you to many NCTE/CCCC Latin@ Caucus members and other identity-based caucuses and committees for their support and help in shaping the identity-based vision for the journal before and during my time as editor. For several years, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi supported this journal in many ways. I was lucky to be at an institution who supported a faculty member who edited a journal with a course release and financially supported

the journal and Associate Editor. All institutions should support journals in such ways and, unfortunately, many don't.

Now, on to describing this 17.1 issue. Our issue journey begins with Nathan Shepley's "They Want to Tell Their Story": What Folklorists and Sociologists Can Teach Compositionists about Linking Scholarly Research to Nonacademic Communities." Part of my vision of this community engagement journal was to make it more interdisciplinary and reach out to those in other disciplines who focused on community work. I attended and presented at the Engaged Scholarship Consortium and Campus Compact. What an experience it was to go to workshops, sessions, and poster events, where those from other disciplines were so engaged in communities. How interesting it was to converse with community engagement journal editors from many disciplines. I realized how much they had to teach me just as we see with Nathan Shepley's interviews with folklorists and sociologists. As Shepley learns from his interviews "with five publicly engaged, university-employed sociologists or folklorists in Houston," those in Rhetoric and Composition involved in composition history have mentors outside our discipline who develop sustained ethical research projects within local nonacademic communities. As we address composition history, especially as it pertains to the history of communities, the ethical implications are great. When we involve students in this type of research, especially research they have an affiliation with from the start or develop through the research process, they need research mentors who also have these affiliations and take great care to work within ethical frameworks. As students navigate through the researcher and researched process, as they see stories they wish to tell shaped through such navigations, Shepley demonstrates, as he experienced through these interviews, the importance of what others outside our discipline can offer. My hope is that one day we will have many scholars and teachers like Nathan Shepley who will venture outside our discipline to discover interdisciplinary mentors. We will be better for it.

This next article, "Writing our own *América*: Latinx middle school students imagine their American Dreams through Photovoice" by Zak Montgomery and Serena O'Neal could not have come out at a better time given the anti-immigrant times we live in today and the

challenges children and young adult immigrants increasingly face today. In this article, Montgomery and O'Neal show us through four Latinx ELL sixth-graders' photovoices how these students' personal presentations of the American dream in collaboration with college students and a Latinx ELL teacher are grounded in individual attainment only by means of a collective dream. This emphasis on their reliance on a collective dream involving family, teachers, and others rather than a "bootstraps" mentality is especially critical today when immigrant families are torn apart through deportations and represents a threat to Latinx student success. Through a combination of Photovoice and "reciprocal service-learning partnerships based in principles of public pedagogy," these students were able to educate those they partnered with, school administrators, teachers, and students on their educational and economic challenges. All of them saw education as a path to fulfilling their American Dream. Their courageous teacher who experienced similar educational and economic challenges as a Latinx immigrant played an important role in challenging a standardized curriculum to create this empowering and validating space for this community partnership to occur. In such oppressive times for U.S. immigrants, this article gives us answers on what we can do to foster hope in our young adult immigrant students. It's a welcome addition.

Beth Godbee and Elizabeth Andrejasich Gibes take us on another journey of partnerships, campus partnerships collaborating with partners in a local YWCA's Racial Justice Program. The "Writing for Social Justice" class focused on creating videos. Given that English Departments and Writing Programs can be particularly large, sometimes we tend to collaborate amongst ourselves thus creating disciplinary silos. In community engagement, we are able to have our own conference. When I first met Beth and Elizabeth at the Conference on Community Writing, I appreciated the strong collaborative interdisciplinary bond they shared as they described their work in a small discussion group I was in at a workshop focused on social justice and racial justice. What I have found in my years as a journal editor of a social justice and racial justice journal is that those who focus on these same issues tend to look beyond their disciplines. We see this in articles in this issue and other articles in previous issues. With scholarship, readers of *Reflections* have and do benefit from interdisciplinary articles because of the rich interdisciplinary

research and approaches. Godbee and Andrejasich continue this tradition, but they enlighten us more by specifically discussing the why and how of cross-campus collaborations with a specific focus on the intersections between librarianship, digital media, and writing studies. They also discuss other partnerships across campus. As they mention in their article, their collaborations consist of the following: “(1) to plan, offer, and teach in-class workshops and out-of-class conferences; (2) to design, model, and scaffold video assignments; (3) to pilot a course tutoring program for undergraduate peer mentoring; and (4) to engage in other cross-campus collaborations that further strengthened our learning and relationship with the YWCA.” With their interdisciplinary efforts across campus, they were able to rename the Digital Media Studio to Digital Media Scholarship thus promoting a more interdisciplinary approach to digital media. Renaming a disciplinary area to make it more interdisciplinary is no easy task in academia, so I applaud them for their cross-collaborations.

The word “Reflections” is a significant word in this journal’s title. It means something to Sarah Hardison O’Connor in her article “The Role of Narrative in Student Engagement” as she describes how student narratives in service-learning play a significant role in shaping their identities and understandings when working with communities. Hardison O’Connor shares with us her early career background in creative writing and how it shaped the narrative elements in the course “Writing in the Community.” Those faculty who are involved in community engagement courses will benefit from her creative writing background as she shares her ways of weaving mentor texts and narratives into students’ readings and writings. This is yet another interdisciplinary connection and a way of appreciating faculty who come from multiple disciplines. Mentor texts are very prevalent in creative writing and education classes. As one of her students writes, mentor texts belong in community writing classes as well: “All of the people we have read about started their journey by serving their community, whether it was accidental or with a set purpose.” By reading and following the personal journeys from leaders in community engagement and activism, students gain confidence in writing their community engagement narratives. Student narratives, as Hardison O’Connor points out in her abstract, “give broader context to students’ service, foster critical consciousness, help students believe they can contribute in

their own communities, and contribute to making service-learning a transformative experience, all outcomes that remind us of the importance of the humanities in forming active citizens.” The more subjective students become through reading mentor texts and writing narratives with the help of their instructors and community members, the more possibilities they have in understanding these subjectivities in relation to the communities they engage with.

The next article by Johanna Phelps-Hillen also places an emphasis on reflections, but in this case, the reflections take on a more feminist engagement praxis approach when Phelps-Hillen brings on her community partner as a co-teacher and co-developer of a technical writing class. The class becomes one grounded in civic engagement and activism. “Collaborative and democratic engagement” with her co-teacher and community partner becomes vital to enacting these empowering feminist initiatives and especially fills a gap in technical writing and community engagement. She challenges deficit narratives that privilege knowledge-making within the academy instead of the community. The co-teacher/co-community partner greatly participated in shaping this course and ultimately help Phelps-Hillen in engaging students and co-teachers through reflective questions. As Phelps-Hillen describes towards the end of her article “Engagement efforts undertaken without considerable project development and management, or lacking regular self-reflection and assessment, merely reify the discourses that disempower communities.” Phelps-Hillen also includes a section at the end chronicling the challenges and breakthroughs of this feminist approach.

Barbara LeSavoy’s “*One Billion Rising: Theorizing Bodies, Resistance, and Engagement in a Campus Stop Violence Against Women Movement*” is another feminist article with interesting connections to Irene Lietz and Erin Tunney’s Fall 2015 article “Service Learning as Social Justice Activism: Students Help a Campus Shift to Bystander Awareness.” Both articles address campus personal trauma when one of their female students is murdered by the hands of their boyfriend. Both describe campus engaged movements to bring awareness to these acts of violence. Lietz and Tunney describe the classroom interdisciplinary courses they developed together to bring about bystander awareness. LeSavoy discusses a national movement, *One*

Billion Rising, brought to campus to deal in part with their personal trauma of this lost student, but she also goes on to critique this multidisciplinary flash-mob dance and open mic poetry event on her campus and its limitations. She asks important questions for campuses who have *One Billion Rising* events including her own: “But when the dancing, music, and poetry subsided, who and what had we moved? And what would become of the multidisciplinary points of encounter to our campus engagement efforts?” As editor of a small independent community engagement journal, I have to ask myself why I’m seeing a number of submissions addressing similar issues of campus violence and harassment. Readers should be asking these questions as well when they look at their campuses’ personal traumas. Publishing articles such as these are our journal’s way of raising awareness and perhaps fostering dialogues in these areas of community engagement. Who knows, perhaps you as a reader will be inspired by these articles and take community engagement action to diminish these types of personal traumas on your campuses. It takes a community and multidisciplinary engagement village.

We are now to our final article, Tasha Golden’s “Subalternity in Juvenile Justice: Gendered Oppression and the Rhetoric of Reform.” Some might be asking why there are so many articles in this issue. Well, it is to provide the new co-editors with more room to begin their vision through article selections under their editorship. We continue to focus on women in this article, but this time young women in the juvenile justice system. Through her research, Golden shows us how “the rhetoric surrounding them remains under-studied and under-critiqued” and how oppressive it can be, especially for young LGBTQ+ women and women of color. Connecting with the previous article, we see how most of these young women were/are victims of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, yet this is often underaddressed in the juvenile justice system. This creates challenges for Golden as she works to empower these young women through writing sessions, where they write about some of these experiences. She advocates using “approaches based on critical and culturally sustaining pedagogies, social justice youth development, and radical healing—particularly when working with young women of color.”

Kathryn Yankura Swacha's review of Thomas Ehrlich and Ernestine Fu's *Civic Work Civic Lessons: Two Generations Reflect on Public Service* harks back to Sarah Hardison O'Connor's article with an emphasis on mentor texts for undergraduate students in service-learning classes and models to help them reflect on their experiences with community engagement. As Yankura Swacha discusses in her review, *Civic Work Civic Lessons* provides an ideal cross-generational classroom text from nonacademics engaged with communities with an emphasis in politics and public policy. The conversational book provides practical "how to" and "lessons learned" useful to younger generations interested in civic work or service-learning even though the authors are not in service-learning. These authors' extensive personal reflections in the book would be beneficial models for students to use as they reflect on their experiences with service-learning or community engagement.

Shane Teague's review of Octavio Pimentel's *Historias de Éxito within Mexican Communities: Silenced Voices* is a timely review in the midst of today's heightened Latin@ anti-immigrant rhetoric. As Teague notes, the book problematizes the White European American (WEA) perception of success tied to economics. Success in Latin@ communities is not so tied to economics and more tied to the concept of a good man or woman by helping others (*buena gente*) and working hard (*buen trabajador*). As an example, Teague shares Pimentel's story of Quetzin, an immigrant who became economically successful in the U.S. with a food production business. However, his interpretation of success is defined by "how many people he can help and how he can help them, how hard he works, and his family's well-being." As editor of this journal, I share some of these values of success and wonder how it has shaped my vision of this journal.

Romeo Garcia's review of Kevin A. Browne's *Tropic Tendencies: Rhetoric, Popular Culture, and the Anglophone Caribbean* has interesting connections to Teague's review. Latin@s from Caribbean countries may identify more with Browne's book than Pimentel's book, even if they are not predominantly from Anglophone countries given the constant historical migrations and colonial experiences of these countries. "The body-graphical, geo-graphical, and mobile-graphical cultural displays of expressions" tied to public vernacular rhetoric shape perceptions of success as well. As Garcia references

Cresswell in his review, “Still there persist generalizations for talking about place and culture, risking the erosion of the local culture and the production of homogenized global spaces.” History becomes a performance thus creating shifting identities. Just as WEA perceptions of success are sometimes at odds with certain Latin@s views of success, so too might, in the case of Anglophone Caribbean and other Caribbeans, “the academy and Western conceptualization of agency, as exhibited with resistance and subversion, at times fails to consider a community’s intentions and desires for citizenship and democratic participation.”

Edward Santos Garza’s review of Clare Oberon Garcia, Vershawn Ashanti Young, and Charise Pimentel (Eds.) of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin to The Help: Critical Perspectives on White-Authored Narratives of Black Life* provides critical insights focusing on white-authored books and films focusing on black lives. As discussed in the last two book reviews, we see the pitfalls of WEA misperceptions of the Other as several authors in this edited collection describe. We also see, as in the case of Ebony Lumumba article “praising Eudora Welty for her rarely studied photography, characterizing the writer as a rather responsible chronicler of her milieu.” Interestingly enough, I remember in the early 80’s Welty lovingly showing me and others in an undergraduate literature class these beautiful photos of Southern Blacks rather than talking about her literary works. Early in life, I was introduced to and recognized a Southern white ally author and photographer. I was lucky as a Southern Latin@ to have this experience. The edited collection fits with the interdisciplinary aspect of this issue and “offers a rich, interdisciplinary template that can be adapted by others in race studies. Its voices come from various fields across the humanities, each possessing a facility with Critical Race Theory.”

We’re at the last book review of this issue with a review by Erin Brock Carlson of Harry C. Boyte’s edited collection *Democracy’s Education: Public Work, Citizenship, & The Future of Colleges and Universities*. To my delight, we see yet again another interdisciplinary book; this one is particularly helpful to those involved in interdisciplinary engagement work. With the words “Democracy’s Education,” we see words harking back to John Dewey and indeed some of the theories

relate to this educational reformer. However, as Brock Carlson points out, “the heart of this collection rests upon the notion that we must position education as “a great civic vocation, a vital form of public work” (29)—a positioning that only continues to increase in relevance.” Given our current educational political climate, we need books like these to show us civic engagement across and within the disciplines to combat these challenges.

Thank you, readers, for journeying with me through this issue. I wish you well with all your community engagement endeavors, and it has been my pleasure to serve as your editor.

Cristina Kirklighter

Editor of Reflections: A Journal of Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service Learning