

Are We Still an Academic Journal?

Editing as an Ethical Practice of Change

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I became Editor of *Reflections* in 2008, soon joined by Brian Bailie as a graduate intern in 2008 and, then, as an Associate Editor beginning in 2009. Just prior to this moment, *Reflections* had been transformed from a saddled-stapled publication for engaged dialogue to more formal academic journal binding with more extended articles. The move from an “informal” to a “formal” academic structure also echoed the emerging status of community partnership scholarship in the field. Increasingly, academic and community-based scholars were finding that interest in such work was expanding beyond the capability of traditional journals and series to publish. *Reflections’* expansion was designed to meet that need and to provide it a formal “disciplinary” space. Indeed, this moment also marked the emergence of *Community Literacy Journal*. And it speaks to the ethos of community partnership work that, since that time, the two journals have

fostered a collaborative ethos, both finding a home in the Coalition for Community Writing.

Emerging into disciplinary space, even as a “sub-field,” however, brought its own challenges. Would *Reflections* continue its commitment to pushing boundaries or settle into a détente with the larger field? As Baillie and I took on our work as editors, we would be answering this question through what we might count as scholarship, who would be considered scholars, and which voices would form the bedrock of the journal. These were live questions not only in the pages of the journal, but also in composition and rhetoric as well. As evidenced in the discussion that followed, during our time as editors, we tried to make clear that *Reflections* would continue to foreground work that gave equal weight to academic and community scholars. *Reflections* would work to ensure the journal spoke to all constituencies involved in community partnerships/service-learning—adjuncts, non-tenure track faculty, community organizations, as well as HBCU’s, HSIs, and grassroots community organizations. For us, this was a way to continue the journal’s political and scholarly goal of valuing the literacies, knowledge, and traditions of a plural-versality of communities. And in doing so, we also hoped *Reflections* would continue to offer a broader critique to how the field was structured to try to break the discourse within composition and rhetoric that championed professionalization and disciplinarity. Too often, this discourse represented a fetishization of theory and academic discourse, a professionalization that stepped back from the needs of students in its basic writing courses, stepped away from the needs of resource-poor communities, and removed itself from the difficult work of laboring for the inclusive and democratic society often invoked in its scholarship.

This was the disciplinary and scholarly context in which we began our work.

Parks: My memory is that *Reflections* began as an attempt to bring together all the emergent work occurring under the banner of service-learning and community partnerships. There was a sense

that, at that time, there was no scholarly venue which was focused on such work in composition and rhetoric. I remember when I first saw *Reflections*. It was literally a saddle stapled publication, almost like a 'zine in my mind—a genre of which I'm very fond. I believe that about a year before Barbara Roswell decided to step down, she changed the publication into a journal format with perfect binding for the spine. My memory was that this allowed longer articles as well as added a bit more academic legitimacy to its form, legitimacy which Barbara had already created through its content.

Such changes, though, also created labor issues—you need more infrastructure to manage subscriptions and mailing lists, you have to pay designers and think through mailing costs. Ideally, your journal editor is also given support in the form of a reduced teaching load and graduate assistant help. These topics can seem mundane, but it is exactly such expenses and lack of support that can sink journals, particularly in a period then (and now) when universities are not supporting independent journals. I began hearing about some of the stresses facing independent journals right about the time I also heard Barbara was thinking of stepping down as editor.

My thought was that Syracuse University's Writing Program could be a place that could eliminate some of those structural issues. We had administrative staff like Kristi Johnson, Kristen Krause, and George Rhinehart who could help discover solutions to these issues. We also had graduate students who could help with the daily work of navigating submitted articles. This work would also provide graduate students with the opportunity to see how the field operates. It became a professional development of sorts. So, part of my motivation for getting involved was the thought that beyond the mission of the journal, which I admired, I might be able to figure out a way to make sure that *Reflections* could continue to grow and, ultimately, become self-sustaining.

And here I want to stress two related issues: First, it is not accidental that a privileged place like Syracuse University could support the structure of the journal, which speaks to

the narrow bandwidth of privilege which can support some folks being editors, etc. Second, given the demographics at Research 1 institutions, this also speaks to why editors tend to be overwhelmingly white, typically male—which is also to note the male and white supremacy which marks our field. Recognizing this larger context, as an editor, that is, I felt a responsibility not to exist within that bubble of privilege but to think about how to build *Reflections* in a way that could negate many of the structures that kept academic publishing so contained within a racist/elitist history, opening it up to a larger audience of scholars and activists.

Baillie: I began working on *Reflections* in Fall 2008 with volume 8, issue 1, *Teaching Peace: On the Frontline of Non-Violence*. The year before, in Fall 2007, I had just started in the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric program (CCR) at Syracuse University (SU). Even a year later, I was still completely a fish out of water in every sense: I was a returning student; I was older than a number of the other grad students in CCR. And I was very shocked by the material differences coming from a state school like Cal State San Bernardino, which was an open-access school for the most part. Even after a year of attending SU/CCR, I remember saying to myself, “I don’t know if this is for me. I don’t know if I can do this anymore.” Because even at the physical, visual level, I felt different. The way I dressed was so different than how other people on campus dressed. I had never realized that people actually dressed in total preppy outfits as daily clothes, not just for some special occasion. In fact, when I showed up for the beginning of school year’s department orientation and business meetings at the start of my second year, I’m still dressed like a gutter punk. I’ve got my shaved head, my long shorts, my black tee shirt with whatever band I was into at the time and my black chucks and my high socks. I completely stick out like a sore thumb.

In fact, my clothes made clear how everything was so different at SU. Most of the students there came from money; and even if they weren’t wealthy, a large percentage were not first gen college students—which I was—and most, even if of modest means, grew up in a higher socio-economic class than I did. Cal

State San Bernardino (at the time) was such a working-class, first gen, Hispanic-serving, open-access school. The faculty in my Comp-Rhet MA program said that Comp-Rhet was a really progressive discipline. It's a space where you can fight for things like social justice. You can do things to help first generation students.

So, when I was at SU, I kept asking myself, "How is that possible here? How would the training necessary for that type of work come from a place like this? And when the *Reflections* internship opened up, that was the space where I could see the chance to get such training and some exposure to work that was about social justice, giving voice to people often excluded from academic discourse. It seemed a space where the type of discourses that needed to be made available in our composition classrooms could be broadcast to Comp-Rhet scholar-teachers, and hopefully, make its way into FYC courses so that first gen students could see their own cultural literacies staring back at them.

Parks: There's resonance between us on that issue. I was a first-generation student as well. When I went to the University of Pittsburgh, the working class was quickly vanishing from Pittsburgh and from the university itself. I was interested in learning what should be done in response. What's my responsibility as someone who comes from a certain community to that community? That's what led me to community partnership work. Then with *Reflections*, I found a place that takes some of these issues and gives them a platform. I mean at that point there wasn't a platform like *Reflections* that would claim (or reclaim) public engagement, politics, and political alignments, or that could respond to the commitments the field seemed to be abandoning. There just wasn't a space like that.

And when I first became editor, I was struck by how the writers in the journal wrote with real commitment about their community partners. My fear was that, in becoming an 'academic journal,' the community voices would be excluded. I was also worried that *Reflections* might take on the demographics of a lot of academic journals, publishing and speaking to mainly white Research 1

institution faculty. (In this sense, I believe the recent critiques by Eric Pritchard and Carmen Kynard at the Conference on Community Writing several years ago are dead on.) Those were two of the things that I was very interested in working on. I expect we will talk a lot about the workings of the journal, but we would both say that what makes a journal important, useful, is the work of the authors. The question, for an editor, is how to ensure the broadest range of authors feel welcomed into the project of your publication. I wanted *Reflections* to be seen as a welcoming, inclusive community of scholar-activists.

Baillie: When I first started, I didn't really know what to expect or think. Even when Collette Caton and I did the special issue together (*Social Change through Digital Means*, 10, 1, 2010), I still wasn't sure what the journal should be doing. But the more I read submissions, I realized I really wanted to bring in the voice of the people from the various communities; I also began to notice there was a lot of writing about the community. Remember, I was grinding my way through coursework, reading more of the discipline's journals. I was realizing that those voices—community partners' writing—weren't something you were going to see in established journals like *College English* or *College Composition and Communication*. I mean, even in journals like *JAC* that were supposed to be radical and edgy, you would never read something written by someone from *outside* the academic community. In a lot of journals at the time, you'd read the work of academics who might be writing about a community outside the academy they had worked with, but for all intents and purposes, given what was expected of academic articles and tenure processes (single author, heavy with citations from the field), academics were almost forced into writing as if they spoke for the community.

I thought about Tom Deans' work—who also worked on *Reflections* as the Book Review editor. We didn't just want writing about the community, we wanted writing by the community. We wanted work that helped elevate a voice in the community, aligned with a community goal. We were not interested in pieces written solely for tenure files. Of course, that's a part of the game that we

play in the academy, writing for economic stability. I just didn't believe it should shape the concerns in a journal like *Reflections*. I wanted to see more writing by the community, people who were doing the work *with* the community, or even better, the voices of the people from the community—community partners having a voice in the journal itself.

Parks: That's dead on. It speaks to the way *Reflections* had been offering a different notion of professional tracks than a lot of journals at that point. Because a lot of journals were going bankrupt or having to shrink page numbers because they were losing resources. And the argument went (and still goes), since we're here to support people getting tenure in the field, we have to put our resources there. A decision which made community voices get pushed out. And part of it is that, as most fields professionalize, they leave behind a lot of the people that enable them to be successful. It's like when Kia moves from low end cars to rich cars, or in our case when we leave basic writing students behind so that we can be a "discipline," a "field" with upper division courses and majors. With *Reflections*, as you and I tried to think about it, the goal was to support a different professional identity where the voices of the community were in parallel with and equally respected as those from the academy. Now, that said, I continue to wonder what the community member or organization actually got out of being published in a journal like *Reflections*. I still worry about just co-opting their voices for a seemingly more progressive vision of ourselves.

Bailie: I remember the issue *Democracia, pero ¿quién?*, or *Democracy, but for whom?* (8.2, 2009) that had pieces in both Spanish and in English. In that issue, most of the academics made an effort to let the individual community members speak for themselves, and oftentimes that was in Spanish. The authors set it up so the community stakeholders could just talk, then have their narratives transcribed in Spanish so they could read it later, send it home, or share it with their family and friends. In that case, perhaps, we helped preserve and circulate stories that might get lost—used academic resources for community-driven purposes. We also "strongly suggested" that academic authors include

community artwork, poetry, short stories, or personal narratives. We tried to make it a required material practice and not just paying lip service to community voices in our mission statement or submission guidelines. Our hope was to expand the venues in which creative work might circulate and gain an audience. Again, not sure that was as significant as we hoped.

The other way was that we started doing this work was with covers. You had the idea of making the covers interesting. I remember you telling me “I want every issue to look like a small book—a small book with a cool cover on it. I want to make the journal attractive.” And this emphasis on inclusion worked into the visuals for the covers because I remember asking writers and their community partners for suggestions about what we should use for a given issue. They didn’t have final say because we needed an image that would thematically tie all the articles together, and they weren’t familiar with the content in the other articles going into that issue. It was a practice that wasn’t very formal and was usually just a casual question in an email, but it was a practice that made *Reflections* different. Our readers encountered the community first, on the cover, before they read the work of academics. And this was a practice that continued after we left. Cristina Kirklighter would intentionally use images by community groups, as did Deborah Mutnick and Laurie Grobman. And here, I just want to add, that Jessica Pauszek was particularly important during these transitions, not only for her insights on the journal, but also in her ability to get resources to sustain it. Sometimes, I believe, we tend to look at the “main editors” and forget all the other labor that sustains the intellectual and material success of a journal.

I also remember we were actually a little afraid about the effect of these covers. We’d ask each other, “Wait, is this going to be seen as professional and academic? And if it’s not, will that hurt the reputation, thus circulation, of the journal?” Then, when we would do the table in the exhibitors’ hall at 4Cs, people would just be drawn to our booth. They’d come to the table and say, “Oh, this is amazing! Look at this!” They would just rave on about the look of the journal and hold it up and call their friends.

I remember being at the table during my second or third year working on *Reflections*, and Tim Dougherty and Ben Kuebrich were there with me. We were signing people up to traditional mail subscriptions because they'd tell us, "I want this book." And then we'd explain it was a journal, and they'd get two issues a year—sometimes three if there was a summer issue that year—for \$25.00. The response was always, "Just \$25.00 and I'll get two or three of these? Okay. Fine. Where do I sign up?"

Parks: That was a nice moment. I was worried pretty consistently, though, about the impact of the changes we were making. I can remember the first issue I edited was focused on the aftermath of the hurricanes in New Orleans. That's when I first shrunk the physical size of the journal and changed the cover. Then, as you and I embarked on a whole set of issues where I would say half the writing was community/non-academic, I was wondering if people thought I was killing the journal. There had been all this effort to make it professional and academic, then we pop in there, and we're like, "well, academic is one part, community writing is another." Different voices, different languages, different designs. I wondered to what extent people felt we were squandering what community literacy could be as a field. I remember having that tension inside myself. We could look at sales and argue it seems to be gaining traction, but, still, you can be popular and not respected. It was a real concern.

Bailie: Yeah. And that fear was a real thing, a real concern. I know this because in the *Democracia, pero ¿quién?*... issue, Rachael Shapiro, Collette Caton, and I published an interview we conducted with Victor Villanueva. He talked about when he was the chair of 4Cs, he was telling people doing community literacy or community writing or public rhetorics that they needed to start theorizing what they were doing. He explained he was telling them this because he felt the work done under these monikers was important, yet the only thing the discipline would value was the theory that came from such work or how theory explained the way people were reacting to whatever exigency underpinned a community project. He basically told us that everyday folks talking about their own experiences was good and was needed

to expand the project of humanistic knowledge, but that giving people from outside the academy a space to speak was only going to get these sub-disciplines so far within the discipline, if not the academy. Without theory, these sub-disciplines would eventually lose financial and institutional backing. And, for me, that made this tension we've been talking about real—I mean, Victor Villanueva is laying it out plain as day the danger of what we were doing at *Reflections*. That tension was and still is real. And I'm sure that tension is still experienced at *Reflections* even today.

Parks: Picking up on Villanueva's argument, it's interesting that at the same time as we were publishing different types of writing and different covers, and trying to take seriously the implications of community literacy theories, many of the articles we were receiving didn't often make overt the theories they were using, leaving a lot of folks new to the field unfamiliar with the apparatus informing a lot of the community alliance work being done. Like Villanueva, I wanted *Reflections* to move to pieces which made the theories more explicit, how the work might have been informed by the insights of scholars such as Ellen Cushman or Paula Mathieu. That was a bit of a shift in the journal, and with the move to more community voices, I worried that, as I passed on more traditional articles, we would not get any new writing. There was a period where people were unsure what was happening with the journal. They weren't quite sure what it would mean to publish in *Reflections*.

And that was a period in which I was very consciously thinking that one thing that's keeping all these different moves "legit" (beyond the articles themselves) is that *Reflections* is located in the *Composition and Cultural Rhetoric (CCR) Doctoral Program* and funded by Syracuse University. I thought being housed at CCR gave us a freedom that we wouldn't have in what might, by the field writ large, be considered less of a prestigious program. Which always makes me think about who gets the right to do these experiments? Look, you and I were already two white men with the privilege accorded to that identity in the academy—a privilege that sometimes masks class issues. And you and I could do this at CCR, because it is also a privileged site in the field. But

if you're at a school that doesn't have all that cache, I wonder if you would be able to do it. Could you start a small journal in a different school and push the boundaries this much? Or would you have to play it differently so that it would still count as scholarship in your department, to your dean, your president? Would they fund a radically new venture? It reminds me again that there's always more privilege accorded to the privileged in a sense, you know?

Bailie: I would totally agree with that because, having worked with other journals since *Reflections*, that seems to be an issue elsewhere. If the journal is not at a prestigious institution, not printed on paper, I find people think of it as "slightly less." Consequently, these journals have a harder time pushing boundaries because they need to be seen as legitimate in their institution, which might be more traditional. It seems to me that in that situation, there is really little they can do, format and content and contributor wise, that's pushing the genres in the field. There was good work being published by them, but the journal didn't seem authorized to be different or edgy, despite the goals of the editor/editorial board. Digital publishing has changed this somewhat, but my sense is the overall pattern still holds.

Parks: One of the things we learned is that, when you have to restrict a journal's vision to a "traditional" vision of academic knowledge, not only are community writers not invited, but often other types of scholarship, methodologies, and traditions are also not welcomed. It excludes a diversity of knowledges. To me, it seems unquestionably true when African-American scholars, Latinx scholars, and LGBTQ scholars argue that their scholarship is endlessly blocked from appearing in our journal's fields. That blocking is a direct result of a traditional (read supremacist) definition of knowledge. One of the reasons I worked with Rhea Lathan to create the *Outstanding Composition and Rhetoric Journal Award* was to create criteria which demanded a robust, diverse definition of scholarship in the journal pages, the editor positions, and the editorial board. It was an attempt to use prestige against the confining nature of prestige in the field.

Baillie: That's also a reason we created the *Best of the Independent Journals in Rhetoric and Composition* series: to really draw attention to the journals that were publishing innovative and thought provoking work, often written by folks excluded from the various journals in the field because the space they were working out of was too different or not "prestigious." And I remember our conversations around this work were something like, "well, this is great work, but it just doesn't have the circulation. How can it increase its audience?" That led to how there was also a need to expand who decided what was prestigious work: "what would happen if we let other folks—be they contingent faculty, grad students, junior faculty, faculty from two-year schools or compass point schools"—read a set of articles from smaller journals that we think are just lights out good and let them decide what's the best seven (or eight or nine or ten) articles for a given year?" What if it wasn't the "stars" in the field making these decisions? So that's how we came up with the idea of having "the field" choose the "best" essays.

Parks: Economics was also a part of it. I can remember that we'd been doing *Reflections* together for, I don't know, maybe a year and a half or so, and editors were always coming to me and asking to get more resources for their journals. (Unfortunately, my reputation is that I know how to raise money). That taught me that these journals also weren't getting resources because they often weren't seen as prestigious on their campus—regardless of reputation in the field. That's when we decided if we did the "Best," the proceeds could support a presence at C's, and the editors would use being featured in the volume locally to get more resources from their place. That then might let them do a more robust publishing mission that they probably wanted to do and just couldn't have done before. I can think of instances where this was exactly what happened. Many thanks to Dave Blakesley, by the way, for agreeing to publish "Best" under those above-mentioned strictures.

Looking back, I think it's been, what, a decade since we were involved in *Reflections*? We've both left Syracuse, moved on to other jobs, other editing work. I'm wondering how has your

editorial work changed now that you're in a different space, different labor environment?

Bailie: I now work and teach at the University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College (UCBA), an open-access, two-year, regional college within the larger University of Cincinnati (UC). There's an established culture of shared governance and service at UCBA, so I also read placement tests; I serve on department-level service committees; as well as college-wide service communities; as well as university-wide service committees (most of those are related to the AAUP UC chapter); and I serve as an AAUP associate at UCBA, which is akin to a shop steward. On top of this, I also teach four classes a semester as well as teach two during the school's summer sessions.

It's much more difficult to find time for editorial work beyond my teaching and service commitments, even though such work is still a component for promotion and tenure. I'm now the interview editor at *Composition Forum*. A part of securing that position was due to an interview I had published there during my time as a grad student, but a larger part was that I'd worked with you on *Reflections*. I was a known quantity when it came to editing, and it was understood that I knew how to work on an academic journal. I have a strong feeling that without being a part of *Reflections*, without that experience, which was an experience built on luck, location, funding, and connections, there's no way someone like me—an assistant professor at a two-year college—would have that editor's position.

Parks: That's very true. It's pretty clear those networks of privilege that some people can participate in for a while—and maybe they fall out of and maybe some people never get access to—make a difference. Being at a private, research-intensive university like Syracuse, being a grad student in CCR, which meant receiving funding for your doctoral studies, working on *Reflections*—I mean, all of it together gave you everything you needed to look “real” to other people in the field. Mind you, I mean “real” as indicative of elitist academic attitudes. One of the things I'm proud of is who we published in the journal: grad students, assistant professors,

non-tenure track faculty, community college professors. It was a way in which we tried to imagine the journal having both an intellectual mission and a political mission to change who was allowed to produce knowledge in the field.

Making that happen, though, took a lot of work. I think we sent out hundreds of emails to caucus and special interest groups in our field. We wrote graduate program chairs for recommendations of students with exciting projects. And, probably to the point of irritation, we wrote friends asking about who we might contact, folks producing work that was important and should be shared. And one of the important lessons I learned from talking to folks across the field was how, too often, publications in our field are not seen as welcoming. Whether through the history of who is (is not) published, or who is (is not) on Editorial Boards, journals are endlessly sending out signals of who they consider “scholars” and what they consider “important work.” So even though we stepped into a journal with progressive and inclusive commitments, a real history, there was still a period where we had to persuade folks to trust us—that we actually wanted their work, not their work filtered through white privileged categories. What I learned was that, without an ongoing engaged discussion and relationship with different communities of scholars, you really have no right to publish their work, to expect them to approach you. Journals are only as inclusive as the network of communities they support and from which they can learn.

As I’ve gone on to edit other things, I continued to think that editors have to break the privileged cycle of access, particularly when it is so easy to forget you’re in it. And by “cycle,” I mean journals keep moving within a very narrow range of institutions as academic homes; editors are consistently drawn from R1 institutions; with some important exceptions, editors also continue to identify predominantly as white, mostly male, and, as public orientation, predominantly cis-gendered (though there is obviously more complexity within any one individual across these categories). And, I think, most journals are still only networked to a very small portion of scholars in the field.

I strongly believe that, if this privilege cycle keeps humming along unchecked, then the field itself is reduced. It's a shallow field if only Research 1 faculty are talking about the field, right? Community literacy teaches you that lesson. You come to realize, working in community literacy, that knowledge isn't exclusive, but who gets to circulate and participate in that knowledge production in the field is an exclusive subject position. Privileged editors, like myself, who fit many of the categories just mentioned don't always turn that lens on ourselves. Based on my own mistakes, I've learned you have to think about your own biases—that, as much as possible, you work against ingrained racist, supremacist, and colonialist attitudes embedded in our field and, as a white male, my personal historical trajectory. And if you don't think about it, and work through your own privilege, and work to solicit the work of those different voices, those often-overlooked but vitally important scholar-educators, then you're just an unethical editor.

I also think that, oftentimes, when there's arguments about inclusivity and publishing different types of scholarship, there's this bigotry of identity politics. Like, "oh we just need to publish more marginalized writers because we're, like, do-gooders or something." That's kind of the rhetoric to it. But what I'm trying to say, to enact, is that our bigotry is stopping the field from learning valuable knowledges, traditions, ethics—that we're failing to fully learn the possibilities of our work if we only publish a small set of scholars. And similarly, if our research comes out of one type of classroom, if the research is not focusing on the community college, two-year classroom, HBCU classroom, or Tribal College classroom, the field is missing all those types of literacies that could help our students.

It was an important move, then, when we published issues from the HBCU context, intentionally sought out community college, non-tenure track, and graduate student writers, attempted to support the work of the field's caucuses and special interest groups. This connects to how we tried to reframe the journal: academic and community writers, research and community writing, poetry and prose, covers that reflected a different set of

values, a different sense of “intellectual community” than other journals. That was the engine that drove a lot of the work that we did in *Reflections*. Our idea was that if we’re serious about this, then it has to look different. I’m not sure we actualized the vision, but that was the goal.

Baillie: I think we did pretty well. If we accept that a discourse from a specific discourse community—once it’s validated by specific organizations—becomes knowledge, then our work building on the legacy of *Reflections* (an established journal with specific organizations and institutions supporting it) as a space where those intellectual communities could be “read” or “seen” as legitimate, was useful; it helped make such work become “knowledge” that could be used by people working within English studies.

For example, in *Beyond Politeness: The Role of Principled Dissent* (volume nine, number one), the grassroots work of Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine (OTR) neighborhood residents to organize and establish its own mutual aid centers (Over-the-Rhine Community Housing, the Drop Inn Center, the Peaslee Community Center) eventually resulted in university-community partnerships like the Miami University Center for Community Engagement. When Chris Wilkey (the author of this piece) was able to publish the histories and practices of OTR and make visible what was hitherto unseen by other academics, it became one model for how academics could work *with*, not *for*, community partners in a way that respected and built on and went back to that community’s grassroots work. I think publishing such work helped academics argue in their local situations that such work was “real” because it was published in a peer-reviewed journal. Moreover, since Wilkey discusses how to work with groups like the Over-the-Rhine Peoples Movement to develop creative yet critically literate writing workshops for neighborhood residents or service-learning courses for students from area universities with community defined projects as their focus, he makes social justice work a moment of praxis, not theory, for scholar-teachers in composition and rhetoric. He demonstrates that there are ways to make real the social justice concepts often prized in composition and rhetoric that are also within the wheelhouse of

Comp-Rhet professors—and even better—that the way to do this is to *work with/learn from* everyday folks doing/teaching/making material change in their neighborhoods.

Then, there's Zandra L. Jordan's article, "'Found' Literacy Partnerships: Service and Activism at Spellman College" in the *Historically Black Colleges and Universities* issue (volume 10, number two). In "'Found'...", Jordan explains how it is possible to design and manage elements of an entire institution to work in making students better public citizens and community participants, not just future professionals or consumers. Jordan argues this practice is part-and-parcel of a HBCU like Spellman, and this institutional design promotes a social mindfulness and knowing activism by individual students that continues beyond the classroom. This is important, as it demonstrates two things for other academics: first, a long-term inculcation of a commitment to social change in students is possible through an immersive model; and second, such work does happen in service-learning courses, which is contrary to the critiques of scholars working in and doing community engaged work in predominately white institutions (PWIs). For this last part, Jordan opens the piece by citing the work of Paula Mathieu and Bruce Herzberg, both who discuss a common, troubling move by students at PWIs to see service-learning/community-engaged work as charity, not an attempt at social change. With *Reflections*, Jordan had the platform to make this long-established practice at Spellman visible to a wider, whiter audience of academics. *Reflections* provided that space where Jordan's work would be in the gaze of scholars working in PWIs; and this being in the gaze of scholars at PWIs pointed out this blind spot in community-engaged scholarship. Through publication as the means to make knowledge within a larger discourse community, *Reflections* ensured that what we count as knowledge in the field included the work and teaching and lived professional experience of Jordan.

Both of these articles used the writing of the people involved; that is, the writing of the community involved was directly quoted and deployed as the writing of experts—and rightly so. It demonstrates both Wilkey and Jordan as writing *with* and

using the writing *from* the communities they were engaged with, not as objects of study but as sources of expertise. Additionally, both Wilkey and Jordan pulled on theory and recent academic scholarship to make their arguments. This was important, I think, in the life of the journal, as it demonstrates that our decision to demand more than reports on projects with community partners also helped the work be read (both literally and theoretically) as knowledge.

Similar to books being published at the time on community partnership/literacy and journals such as *Community Literacy Journal*, *Reflections* helped create the motivation for work with the community to be connected to theory and scholarship like Villanueva recommended in my interview. In turn, this allowed the work of the journal to be read as knowledge for academics working in Composition and Rhetoric (with all the baggage associated with that term a la Kuhn or Swales). Overall, this network of publications meant that work in community literacy and service-learning was seen as “real” academic work; that is, a productive site of scholarly work where knowledge was produced, not value-added community service. Even more importantly, it did this through a synthesis of community knowledge and academic knowledge as evidenced by the use of writing from both depositories.

And one final thought: something that’s stuck with me even after my involvement with *Reflections*, having made the choices we did, was that editors have this agency. We have this power to help shape the field. If academic publishing is unjust, to borrow from you, it’s because we let it be. We have the power and the agency to make decisions and choices that move the system towards better, more open, more equitable practices. Editorial boards have the power to choose editors from different constituencies in the field, from different labor or campus environments. We sometimes think of change as being like rocket science. Sometimes it’s as easy as saying yes to this article, asking this person to be editor, having these voices on your editorial board.

Parks: I'm in total agreement. Editing is a deeply ethical and political practice. And you should be judged by the field on whether you are opening up systems and expanding who has a platform not only to speak, but to be heard—not only to publish, but to change the structures of publishing. If you're someone who, as editor, is just interested in reproducing the elite academy, then you should find another line of work.

Baile: Absolutely. This is something that *Reflections*, hopefully, continues to grapple with as it moves into its third decade of publication. As a journal, *Reflections* is already an outsider, but this status is a strength of the journal. The editors shouldn't feel bound to the unspoken norms within our field, especially with its new arrangement with *New City Community Press* and Penn State University Libraries *Open Publishing*, and its use of *Creative Commons* (open access) licenses. I assume this means lower overhead, and therefore, less worry about keeping a large base of subscribers—something I hated about our time with *Reflections*. This means *carte blanche* when it comes to special issues and the editorial teams putting together those special issues. I also hope this means less stress in the behind the scenes work that goes into putting together each issue, and in turn, this means an environment where graduate students who want to learn the ins and outs of working for/publishing an academic journal are invited into the process as part of the editorial team. And I hope those editors and editorial teams are from different constituencies in the field, from different labor or campus environments like you just mentioned. If the folks associated with *Reflections* in the third decade don't do this considering everything the journal currently has going for it, then it's time to shut down the presses and turn off the lights.

Parks: I agree that the new architecture that Deborah Mutnick and Laurie Grobman have put in place for *Reflections* provides immense opportunities for the journal moving forward. And as a former editor, I also want to highlight how Deb and Laurie have really pushed the journal in important political and scholarly ways. When you consider the journal's origins, consider all the labor of editors, writers, and community members during its twenty-

year history; it's such an incredible accomplishment. If I could project any future goals for the journal, at the risk of just coming off completely pompous, I think what actualizes the promise of the new architecture, completes the work of everyone involved these past two decades, is for *Reflections* to establish a community of academic and community scholars where a plural-versality of knowledges and traditions inform the journal. Echoing some insights from a recent dialogue with Iris Ruiz on a slightly different topic, what if *Reflections* became the space where you couldn't locate its dominant intellectual framework, where it wasn't the "white scholar" or "scholars of color" journal? If it were just the space where intersectionality "was"? What might such a framework be able to achieve when considering some of the most divisive and oppressive issues of our time?

To be honest, I'm not even sure I have the wits to articulate such a vision. But in talking to Iris Ruiz, talking to those doing the real work of disciplinary, community, and political change, I can catch glimpses on the horizon. I hope our field will expand its sense of itself and welcome in the new generation of scholar/activist/editors who will make this emerging vision a reality. Which is to say, I hope we can exceed our own limited horizons for a greater sense of justice and equity, both in our field and in the larger world.

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