

# Editor's Introduction

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#Charlottesville.

In the moment of transition between summer and fall, the events in Charlottesville called into question the United States' commitment to equality, equal rights, and racial justice.

It is a question that has been asked before, of course, by individuals, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Angela Davis, as well as organizations, such as The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panthers. It is a question that imbricates itself with other identities and communities – such as the rights of transgender individuals to claim equality in their schools and of indigenous communities to claim the right to control their own land.

During this tumultuous period, *Reflections* has been fortunate to have been led by the intellectual and political commitments of Cristina Kirklighter. During the period of her editorship, she has continued a tradition of seeking scholarship

that connects our readers to pedagogical and partnership strategies, which enable our field to serve a public role—to be on the right side of history in these difficult times. As *Reflections* moves towards new editorial leadership with Deborah Mutnick and Laurie Grobman, we are confident that this vision, this commitment, will not only continue but also be brought into dialogue with the current moment. A moment where democratic norms, civic traditions, and public rhetorics are being distorted into divisive and discriminatory slogans of “blood and soil.”

#Charlottesville.

So while this issue of *Reflections* represents a transition point for the journal, a movement from one editor to a new editorial team, the essays included in these issues attest to the fact that the vision remains the same. These essays, which originated during Cristina Kirklighter’s tenure, remind us of how community-based partnerships and pedagogies can enact democratic and inclusive values, how such enactments are particularly important at this current moment. In “Reciprocity and Power Dynamics: Community Members Grading Students,” Jessica L. Shumake and Rachael Wendler Shah draw together arguments about equity in partnerships and assessment practices to provide us with a model that distributes responsibility and power across members of the project. In this example, community youth have the opportunity to participate in the assessment of their college partners.

Laurie Grobman, Elizabeth Kemmerer, and Meghan Zebertvage’s essay “Counternarratives: Community Writing and Anti-Racist Rhetoric,” written by a professor and two undergraduate students, about a community publication project, equally further articulates the recognition of the necessity to distribute power. Here the arguments expand beyond equality to how our work can provide a “counter story” to histories that elide the resistance (and resistant) strategies of persecuted communities, both in the late 1960s and today. In doing so, the essay allows vernacular strategies of producing and circulating knowledge within such a context to become present, adding to our tools for supporting social justice work.

Indeed, the necessities of learning new forms of communication, alternative models of building publics, are represented in the final essay of this issue. In Elif Guler and Iklim Goksel’s “The Pedagogical Implications of Teaching

Ataturk's 'Address to Youth' for Global Public Rhetorics and Civic Action in the U.S. Writing Classroom," the authors make the point about the importance and value of learning non-Western forms of public address. They remind us of the need for humility when assuming our nation, our way of speaking, is the only pathway to effective public discourse. Clearly, at this current moment, other models are needed.

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Poet Charles W. Brice offers his piece, *Somebody Else's Babies*, as a moment of reflection on a troubled social and political climate, a climate that allows people to be cast off as "someone else's babies," rather than all part of the same humanity.

This issue also includes four book reviews that each speak to themes of transitions and creating new publics. In reviewing *Genre and the Performance of Publics*, by Mary Jo Reiff and Anis Bawarshi (Eds.), Charles N. Lesh describes how "an emphasis on genre shows us the important role that writing plays in the shaping and reshaping of public life, and those of us invested in the study of communities, publics, and writing should consider genre an important resource as we make sense of the complex work that writing does in the world."

As we know, writing does, indeed, do complex work. And this issue asks readers to continue thinking about how writing connects to moments of social justice — how writing has the potential to create new publics, resist oppressive forms, and reinvigorate overlooked histories.

Mark Latta's review of *Collaborative Imagination* by Paul Feigenbaum, reminds us of the need to "revisit the nature of 'justice oriented' scholarship" in the current political climate. Joseph Good reviews Iswari P. Pandey's *South Asian in the Mid-South: Migrations of Literacies* and focuses on how Pandey's book contributes to discussions of literacy and movement, particularly within migrant communities. In Megan M. Opperman review of *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy* by Eric Darnell Pritchard, Opperman explains how *Fashioning Lives* moves beyond binaries and non-normative gendered discussions to explore an intersectional understanding of Queers of Color. Writing's connection to social justice,

stories of migration, as well as intersectional forms of identity that push against traditional frameworks, is apparent in this issue.

To further support these conversations, *Reflections* has decided to publish this issue in combination with a special multi-modal issue called *Community Resistance, Justice, and Sustainability in the Face of Political Adversity*, all of which is available as open access texts at [www.reflectionsjournal.net/communityresistance](http://www.reflectionsjournal.net/communityresistance). In this special issue, Isabel Baca, Laura Gonzales, and Victor del Hierro have curated a collection of texts that speak to moments of resistance, resilience, and reflection by scholars and community activists. The work here is imbued with reflection on identity as writers, scholars, activists, and on partnership work, spanning discussions of: Black women's agency in claiming their own identity; feminist writing pedagogies grounded in self-narratives and reflection; reflections on Ferguson by communities; Latinx youth using multimodality as a means of empowering expression; and the development of a free activist and leadership course for community members in Central Florida.

*Reflections* is published by *New City Community Press* ([www.newcitycommunitypress.com](http://www.newcitycommunitypress.com)). *New City Community Press* was born out of community partnerships in Philadelphia. It is committed to providing a venue for community members and university faculty to highlight the power of their collaborative work and the importance of hearing from all members of society. We are proud to have this connection to *Reflections* and to the editors and authors who enable such important conversations within our field.

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