Call for Papers

Reflections Special Issue: Prison Writing, Literacies and Communities
Coedited by Wendy Hinshaw and Tobi Jacobi

In recent years “mass incarceration” has become part of our national vocabulary, indicating a growing awareness about the cost (in lives and dollars) of maintaining the world’s largest prison population. And yet even as public discourses increasingly criticize the criminal justice system, we maintain the fiction of “crime and punishment” that serves as its basis. At this moment we continue to incarcerate—and also profit from the incarceration of—those who are our most vulnerable: people of color, asylum-seeking families, the mentally ill, those with severe addictions, and, of course, those without the financial resources to make bail or pay for a thorough defense. Our imaginations of who we incarcerate and why continue to evolve, shaped by the stories we hear and the experiences and perspectives we come to know. Prison writing—writing by and with people in prison—has always been a primary agent in changing public perceptions, and inspiring writing and movements for change on the outside on behalf of prisoners. Literacy practices figure at the center of how we learn from, partner with, and work within prisons, and this call seeks submissions to a special issue of Reflections that examines—and exhibits—writing practices and communities formed in and around prisons.

Reflections: A Journal of Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service Learning publishes wide-ranging and innovative work on community-engaged writing, and has a nearly 20-year history of leading writing and rhetoric’s scholarly and theoretical study of service-learning, public rhetoric, community writing, civic writing, and community literacy. In 2004, Reflections published a special issue: Prison Literacies, Narratives and Community Connections. Edited by Tobi Jacobi and Patricia O’Connor, this issue brought together voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated writers, prison teachers, researchers and community members. Fifteen years later, coeditors Wendy Hinshaw and Tobi Jacobi call for submissions for a new special issue devoted to the study, practice, and support of writing, as well as other
kinds of community partnerships and educational opportunities in prisons and/or other rehabilitative or treatment institutions. We strongly encourage submissions from writers on the inside, including academic as well as creative work, as well as teachers, researchers and community members engaged in various aspects of prison literacy. This might include writing in various kinds of formal and informal education settings, writing centers, clubs and programs; university and community partners writing with, for, or about individuals inside prison; and various modes of writing, including multimodal technology as well as technological accommodations. Submissions may consider one or more of the following questions among other possible themes:

- How have the technologies of prison writing changed, and how have they changed prison writing? For example, how do the costs associated with phone calls and email through companies like JPay change speaking and writing practices, as well as shape family and community relationships more broadly?
- How have literacy and higher education programs continued to develop more than twenty years after the federal government banned prisoners from receiving Pell Grants? What is the future of higher education in prison?
- How are incarcerated writers reshaping public conversations about education and incarceration in this country? How is writing by prisoners being circulated?
- How are prison writing programs sustaining and assessing themselves?
- How are organizations on the outside supporting prison literacy and education programs?
- How have prisoners, former prisoners, and community allies worked together to restore voting rights and other civil rights and forms of civic participation to people with felony convictions in states across the country?
Timeline for Submissions:

Proposals due: October 10
Drafts due: December 31
Return drafts: February 15
Revisions due: March 30
Copyedits: Manuscript editing complete by April 30
Design & publicizing: May 30
Print: June 30
Distribute: July 15
New, in Living Color!

Type Matters: The Rhetoricity of Letterforms edited by Christopher Scott Wyatt and Dânielle Nicole DeVoss

Rhetoric and Experience Architecture edited by Liza Potts and Michael J. Salvo

New Releases

The Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing: Scholarship and Applications edited by Nicholas N. Behm, Sherry Rankins-Robertson, and Duane Roen

Cross-Border Networks in Writing Studies edited by Derek Mueller, Andrea Williams, Louise Wetherbee Phelps, and Jennifer Clary-Lemon

Labored: The State(ment) and Future of Work in Composition edited by Randall McClure, Dayna V. Goldstein, and Michael A. Pemberton


Congratulations to These Recent Award Winners!

Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future by Asao Inoue, Best Book Award, CCCC, Best Book, Council of Writing Program Administrators (2017)

The WPA Outcomes Statement—A Decade Later
Edited by Nicholas N. Behm, Gregory R. Glau, Deborah H. Holdstein, Duane Roen, and Edward M. White, Best Book Award, Council of Writing Program Administrators (July, 2015)

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