August 2021

Editorial Introduction:Volume 20, Issue 3

Kenneth Varner
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, phdkenny@gmail.com

David Carlson
Arizona State University, david.l.carlson@asu.edu

Editorial Introduction

Kenneth Varner & David Lee Carlson

Writing these editorial introductions is always an interesting moment of introspection for us as editors of *Taboo*. We spend a long time with these pieces. While we try to move as fast as we can any number of factors complicate the process. We depend on reviewers to give thoughtful feedback, authors to take feedback and make reflexive decisions on revisions, our own editorial team to make tough decisions on the collections of pieces, and then finally on Caddo Gap Press to take the raw documents and format them for our final upload. The publication process is often too illusive, and so we want to reveal some of these mysteries and tell some truths about publishing from our perspective before you engage with this issue and as you consider submitting a piece to *Taboo*.

Even as full professors and editors of this journal we are both amazed by the complexity of publishing. From idea to published manuscript it can be quite an arduous journey. In graduate school many of us are taught that every piece will find it's home, but few of us are walked through the process of acquiring this hom—in essence we often fail to have a thoughtful academic real estate agent to help us navigate the process of looking for a home, seeing that the home meets not only our needs but is within our means, is in the 'right' location, has neighbors we want to be near, and then process the transaction through its close. And none of us have home warranties to go back and fix what is published. In other words what we publish in some way remains frozen in time. Who among us that has published

Kenneth Varner is an associate professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. David Lee Carlson is an associate professor of qualitative inquiry in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona. Email addresses: kenneth.varner@ unlv.edu & david.l.carlson@asu.edu

hasn't thought twice about nearly everything we have written once we see it in final form. The "I wish I would have…" or even worse the "why didn't you…" start to loom in our heads, long after the 'sale' is finalized and the piece goes to print.

At *Taboo*, as our name suggests, we work to push at the edges and boundaries, but those boundaries and edges of whatever it is sometime remain at bay even our own minds. Even naming what we are discussing in this introduction is a form of active risk taking and runs counter to the publishing culture which seems hell bent on keeping up appearances over nurturing a space of complex dialogue, but yet in other ways conforms to even what it critiques. At *Taboo* we straddle lines, and sometimes that means we fall. On one hand Peer Review is an integral part of gaining perspectives, but that act runs the serious risk, when combined with editorial decision making, of limiting voices and strongarming authors into perspectives they may not wish to take. In this journal we as the editors make decisions about the publication of pieces and we do so with the aim of refraining from engaging our personal biases, our Eurocentricities, and our conformist academic sensibilities grated into us by the promotion and tenure process. But we also recognize that we likely often fail. And, how do we strike a balance so that the journal doesn't become 'Academics Gone Wild?'

So a little about what we do, realizing neither *Taboo* or other journals readily share their process very fully. As editors we read each article first ourselves and reject anything that we can't imagine could revise it's way into *Taboo*. We ask authors for input on reviewers and for those making it to the next stage we examine the list of reviewers. Some journals do this, though we really don't have the foggiest clue how closely other journals use these recommendations. We ask for up to three reviewers—but why? And, do we even use them? The honest answer is sometimes, but what is important in asking for your reviewers' names is to gain a sense about how you as authors conceptualize your work? With whom do you associate your work and what can we learn about the work by who is selected. We send manuscripts to two reviewers and only use a third reviewer when the first two we receive present us with a conflict in perspectives we cannot resolve on our own—the third reviewer when needed breaks the tie and helps us land on one side of a piece. One reviewer is nearly always someone who has published in *Taboo* before. Authors who we have published have met our criteria for publication in a variety of interesting ways, plus we have a sense from those authors how they react to work within what is the scope of this journal. The second reviewer comes from a combined pool which could include author-nominated reviewers, authors of cited pieces in the manuscripts, the editorial board, and those in the field we know and recognize. We also prefer to ask junior scholars (with a sensitivity to not asking too much of junior folks) to complete at least one of the reviews as they often have their ears to the ground in a different way than those of us further along—we find that most often junior scholars provide more timely, more thoughtful, more on-point, and more field-changing feedback than others.

Once reviews have been received we have the difficult editorial task of making decisions. Rejections are the hardest to make, though the emails are the simplest in their form. Rejecting a piece is not an easy decision. We value the need to publish, particularly for junior faculty and graduate students, but we also have a responsibility to the overall direction of the journal. Many times pieces we have rejected really do not attend well enough to the guiding questions of the journal. We read it and send it out for review because we see the connection but the reviewers are asked to consider the journal's guiding questions thoroughly and their feedback often makes clear that the fit just isn't there. We see, far too often, pieces that are rejected from other journals being submitted to us, but what makes us *Taboo* is not that we are a home for otherwise dead manuscripts. More traditional journals often reject pieces for problematic reasons, including discomfort with complex topics that feel provoking. But what provokes discomfort in another journal is not itself *Taboo* just because others didn't like it or weren't open to it. And, we encourage potential authors to look carefully at our guiding questions before simply submitting a manuscript rejected elsewhere or otherwise just not a good fit in a traditional journal. We are looking for the 'something more'—the edge that wasn't expected, the thing so complex that no one dare say. And we are in a constant process of getting there. As editors we are not yet satisfied that even the published pieces are *Taboo* enough for *Taboo*, but we see them squarely on a pathway of getting there and at least initiating that type of dialogue among the readers.

Very rarely do pieces get accepted as they are—instead most pieces require revision. We have room to improve on how reviewers engage as academics and we recognize that few of us are taught how to provide review—it is something we do but not necessarily something we learned how to do. *Taboo* is not great at this—yet—but we are trying to get reviewers to let go of that which they 'know' about giving feedback and to let go of the thinly veiled space they sit behind as 'blind' reviewers. We have a few ideas about what this might look like moving forward that we hope to roll out over the next year. About 50% of the time we are willing to share reviewer feedback as it comes. About 50% of the time, however, we narrate from the reviewers feedback, editing out comments and narration that doesn't move the piece forward or that would otherwise cause the author to chase contradictions that have no benefit to the piece. As Cynthia Dillard has famously said "cut to heal, not to wound." Sometimes we do intentionally share conflicting reviewer feedback because it is important to know that revising isn't just doing what reviewers tell you to do, it is making intentional choices about how to respond, when to say no to feedback, and how to maintain ownership of the piece and not simply fold to perceived pressure from us as the editors or from the reviewers through us; and, again, there is a balance—nearly everything can be improved from thoughtful revision. Now rejecting feedback in a revision may not result in publication but we are shy from pieces willing to fold on their bottom line simply because of feedback. We want authors to send us back a chart or table out-

lining the pieces of feedback and the decision-making about each piece. We want to be in a dialogue throughout the review process—most importantly we want to see the tensions in the pieces: where they emerge and how the resolve, if at all.

Revisions are only useful to the extent that they move work forward. Too often the revision process is used as an academic weapon of mass destruction. Hiding behind the anonymous nature of feedback we believe too many journals play the roll of strong-armers to gatekeep, maintain a narrow and straight lane of academic engagement, and otherwise maintain a very privileged set of perspectives. As we have said several times in this piece, this process is complex. There are no right answers. *Taboo* isn't better than other journals and we struggle. We don't know if other journals are struggling the same way and asking themselves these same questions. They may; we are. We are not engaged by other editors this way and resultantly we think a first step is naming these struggles to try to provoke the conversation ourselves.

At the end of the day we work to be inclusive and intentional in our final selections and even the order of pieces is meant to achieve a flow for readers by confronting different ideas. Before submitting to *Taboo* we really encourage folks to read the last years' worth of pieces, particularly regular issues, to see where our head space is. Reading the pieces gives you a sense of our academic neighborhood, and can help you decide if you or your real estate agent should bother to spend time looking to acquire a plot of land in the *Taboo* community.

This year after conversation with Caddo Gap Press, we have had to implement a modest Article Processing Charge (APC). We say modest and you may say super cheap or super expensive and it is all about perspective, of course. *Taboo* has long avoided this type of charge. The journal used to survive through subscription fees passed on to readers when it was a print journal and since then both Caddo Gap Press and the editors have done this work pro bono. Large journals attached to organization membership charge for their journals through dues, others through passing costs on to universities in the form of database subscriptions. Others still charge large fees directly to authors or give them the option to make their work available by paying a fee. To continue the real estate metaphor, every transaction has its own pathways to closing and regardless of who, closing costs have to be factored in. In the end we as a journal and Caddo Gap Press as the publisher have absorbed the closing points for *Taboo* for some time. With a commitment to remaining open access and free to readers we have worked to support the publication of the journal with our own time and resources. In the end the model is not sustainable. The time and costs associated with the journal work are too great to continue that way. In agreement with Caddo Gap Press we have implemented the APC so that we can continue to ensure that readers have access to *Taboo* and we can maintain a high-quality journal that makes a difference. We know that an APC presents a challenge for some folks, and we encourage you to look at institutional resources that can offset these fees. In the end we have charged the most modest

fee we can to get the work done. It is worth mentioning that APC is only assessed after we have selected a piece. We do not factor in the APC as a part of the decision making and would find that highly problematic. The APC is only offsetting the costs for those who are willing to publish.

Finally we will also be sending a call soon for a special issue of *Taboo* that will look to explore how academics have experienced publishing in their disciplines and from their perspectives. We want to 'trouble' what academic publishing really means, examine it's stakes and consequences, and chart out a way of thinking through how to resolve otherwise unresolvable thoughts and feelings about the enterprise of publishing, particularly as it relates to obtaining and being successful on tenure tracks.

As always, we encourage dialogue with us as editors and welcome pieces that take up themes presented by other authors or by our introductions in addition to that which you want to share with the broader academic community. And as in previous issues, we are ending this introduction with the abstract of each of the articles in this issue so that you can gain a sense of what the authors of these pieces are offering.

In solidarity,
Kenny and David

Divergent Values: A Family Critical Race Theory Analysis of Families of Color and Their Perceptions of Teachers and Teaching as a Profession—Norma A. Marrun, Marcela Rodríguez-Campo, Tara J. Plachowski, and Christine Clark

Abstract: In seeking strategies for diversifying the U.S. public school teacher workforce, education policymakers and teacher education programs need to meaningfully consider input from the families of PK-12 Students of Color. Using a Family Critical Race Theory (FamilyCrit) analysis, this article examines the educational experiences and related perspectives of Families of Color about teachers and the teaching profession. Findings reveal that Families of Color perceive teaching as a form of caring and teachers as extended family members. Families of Color wrestled with a divergence of values in encouraging their children to pursue their passions, while concomitantly confronting economic injustices. Findings challenge dominant narratives that Families of Color do not have college or career aspirations for their children.

A Mixed-Methods Analysis Of Educational Spaces And Black Identity Development—Kala Burrell-Craft & Danielle Eugene

Abstract: A significant body of literature has examined how racial identity attitudes predict academic achievement of Black students attending predominately White institutions (e.g., Leath et al., 2019) and how racial identity beliefs predicts attitudes towards counseling utilization (Constantine et al., 2005; Helms & Carter,

1991; Nickerson et al., 1994). Racial identity studies have also sought to predict student attitudes about race, psychological adjustment, and coping (Miller-Cotto & Brynes, 2016). Cross (1971) sought to trace the Black journey from self-hate to self-healing through his Nigrescence theory. As complicated as Blackness is, no one study in isolation will ever unpack its brilliance,excellence, resilience, nastiness, and multi-facetedness. This mixed-methods analysis is one of many attempts to explore more critically the associations between educational spaces, places, and Black identity development.

A Study of Chinese University English teachers' Subjectivity in a Neoliberal EAP Policy Implementation: From a Foucauldian Perspective—Yulong Li, Yixuan Feng, and Xiaojing Liu

Abstract: Human capital has had a considerable influence on the education policies in China. In this paper, a new policy of the Shanghai Education Bureau is described in which universities were strongly recommended to replace their English in general education programs with an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) one, in order to produce talent for regional and national development. Using a Foucauldian perspective to explore the extent the teachers were subjectified by the Shanghai EAP Policy. The teachers had demonstrated their subjectivity, particularly via critiquing, questioning the discourse and mediating their EAP teaching. Teachers' praxis becomes useful in helping them to develop independent professionalism to sustain their subjectivity in a neoliberal discourse.

White Supremacists and the White Urge to Call Them Terrorists Background—Jin Chang

Abstract: In this article, I argue that the election and inauguration of President Biden should not be a moment of celebration for any scholar, activist, or individual committed to ending the white supremacist empire of America, especially in relation to his condemnation of the January 6th white supremacist rioters as "domestic terrorists." However, I believe it is for a different reason than much of the current discourse suggests from many progress scholars and journalists. The current line many progressive scholars and activists cite as the reason to avoid calling white supremacists "terrorists" has been because they fear such language will be used to justify the increase in militarization from the state. The issue I see with this argument is that regardless of what white activists, scholars, and everyday individuals call the white supremacists, the state has already stated its interest in using white supremacists as "terrorists" to expand the militarization of the state. Instead, I argue that the urge to call white supremacist rioters terrorists is actually one of the ways white supremacy continues in more subtle ways in society. This analysis provides one example of how we can search for the white supremacist roots in President Biden's actions.

(Re)Opening Closed/ness: Hauntological Engagements with Historical Markers in the Threshold of Mastery—Bretton A. Varga & Timothy Monreal

Abstract: This project explored functionalities of (ghostly) mastery within the radical context of institutionally historical designations. We first identified historical designations of our university campuses and then, using Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) thinking with theory, entangled our hauntological perspectives with published "material" (e.g., university website articles, materials on official websites) and researcher generated photographs. As such, the purpose of this project is to loosen the grip of narrative mastery governing the designation of historical markers located throughout learning institutions. Thus, in unleashing ghosts/hauntings, we offer a theoretically informed opening towards troubling the vulnerability of history/ies, narratives, and spaces institutions seek to—and frequently successfully—master.

'Damn Deleuze': The Unexpected Artefacts of Reading Together—Maureen A. Flint & Carlson H. Coogler

Abstract: What does reading together produce? As we read *A Thousand Plateaus* together, Deleuze and Guattari butted into our dreams, our art-making, and our everyday lives. We found that their concepts were active, blurring the lines between theory, method and art. In this paper, we follow these invasions and interruptions of our thinking and living, collecting and discussing them as artefacts that help us make sense of reading and writing together as methodological, theoretical, artful inquiry. By taking up and sharing artefact—fragments of encounters, snapshots of artmaking, quotes from novels or poetry that embedded in our conversations about haecceity and becoming, and traces of texts sent back and forth in the intervening weeks between our meetin—we dwell within the momentary becomings of reading together. We invite the reader to think with us about these artefacts and encounters and to make their own connections between theory, reading, and (academic) life. We linger in the practice of reading to wonder together, what does this do, how does this work, what does this produce (in methodology, in pedagogy, in research?)

Problematizing the Use of the Cultural Autobiography In Pre-Service Multicultural Education Courses—Aaron C. Bruewer, Gilbert Park, & Jayne Beilke

Abstract: This article explores the qualitative methodology of life history as an instructional tool for pre-service teachers at a midwestern regional public university. Specifically, the authors problematize the use of the cultural autobiography assignment for undergraduate teacher candidates enrolled in required multicultural education courses as a way to evolve its use. While life history has the potential to promote critical reflections on one's own position in a complex interplay of

power relations, it can also reify pre-existing prejudicial attitudes. The paper includes composite quotes from the papers of 85 undergraduate students to support authors and suggests the incorporation of digital tools to make this assignment more meaningful as the authors look to explore its potential in the 21st century.

Exploring the Myth of School-University Partnerships: Untangling District Resistance and Academic Capitalism—Brianne Morettini, Dan Tulino, & Shelley Zion

Abstract: In this article we engage in reflexive methodology to make sense of our experiences in a particular school-university partnership and the district-level resistance from central office administrators we encountered in our work. We explore the nuanced accounts of resistance to reform and change in the context of a school-university partnership from central office or district-level administrators, even when teachers themselves acted as enthusiastic agents of change; to the general public, the inner-workings of district-level offices remain obscured. The purposes of the study, therefore, are two-fold: one, to shift blame away from teachers and students and center the role of district-level administrators as gatekeepers to social justice-oriented work even when teachers embrace it; and, two, to hold ourselves accountable to the students, teachers, and communities we serve. We situate our experiences within a larger neoliberal ideological framework and how our own social positions as university faculty were largely shaped by academic capitalism. The generative insights gleaned through our analysis are used to lay out a road map of possibilities for others engaged in social-justice projects within school-university partnerships.

A Tribe Called Trump, Motivation Behind the Education Line: Why Some People of Color Voted for the Bully-in-Chief?—Leah P. Hollis

Abstract: Throughout the 2020 election, a constant question arose, "How can they vote for Trump?" Within the context of tribalism and the disenfranchised status created by the deteriorated blue-collar job market, I reflect on labor history to explain how those who are denied affordable education are often excluded from the American dream. This trend disproportionately affects the Black community. In turn, this population potentially remains reminiscent of how America was supposedly 'great' for them in the industrial past. Supported by descriptive statistics, I reflect on the educational line in red GOP states and contested states during the 2020 presidential election. The article concludes with the recommendation that higher education must be affordable to help communities transcend the dream of manufacturing for survival, but instead embrace education as a well-informed position in supporting themselves and our democracy.