

2020

From the Editor: On Editing

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Recommended Citation

Machosky, Brenda (2020) "From the Editor: On Editing," *Antipodes*: Vol. 34 : Iss. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/antipodes/vol34/iss1/1>

From the Editor

ON EDITING

Dedicated to the Memory of Helen Tartar, editor extraordinaire

Before I wrote my first book, I didn't fully understand how the "editor" really worked. In shepherding that first book to publication, I had the good fortune and excellent guidance of Helen Tartar, longtime humanities editor at Stanford University Press, underappreciated there and in a fit of downsizing, forced to relocate to Fordham University Press, where she was given the means and the opportunity to flourish, especially in her forte, working with young scholars. My book had its particular fits and starts and a bit of a challenge getting past the review board. I'll never forget sitting with Helen at a book exhibit, probably at the American Comparative Literature Association annual convention, a moment of quiet while everyone was in sessions, and figuring out the last revisions to my manuscript. It wasn't a long conversation, or a demanding one, but somehow, she was working her magic. I left that convention knowing exactly what I needed to do, and I marveled at her ability to help me figure that out. At that point, I started to know what an editor could do, to understand when writers talked about "my editor" and all that this relationship implied.

I realized the full power of a talented and successful editor at the memorial service for Helen Tartar after her untimely death, again at a meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association in New York City. Attendees were encouraged to bring copies of their books to display—too many to count and an awesome display of her range. But the stories told by those, like me, who were fortunate enough to work with her as an editor, deepened my understanding of what a good editor can do. Here were people, now well respected and established scholars, talking about their own "quiet moments" receiving her advice to get their struggling books through to publication.

So now I am an editor, of a journal, a different kind of editing, and I am new at it. After a few issues in which I have learned the process, how to work with the publishing platform, and started to develop systems for solicitation and reviewers, I can now reflect on what it means to be an editor of this journal, *Antipodes*, and the editorial decisions I have already started to make. As I reviewed this issue's content, while simultaneously working on new submissions and calls for future issues, I started to reflect on my role, and responsibility, as an editor. The people I've admired most in academia have all been like Helen. They *make* the time to "pay it forward" to the next generation. *Kuleana* is an untranslatable Hawaiian word for something like fundamental responsibility. As an editor, my *kuleana* is to treat each submission with respect and encouragement. Teaching at a university without graduate students, editing is an opportunity for me to work with scholars making

their way into publishing, as an associate editor at *Speculum* did for me with my first article (when I barely knew what a page proof was, and the proof came in the mail!). And being an editor is a growth opportunity for me as I work with established scholars on publication.

In editing a journal sponsored by an organization, the American Association of Australasian Literary Studies (AAALS), I have been thinking of ways to make the project of each issue more shared, more collective. In the first issue I edited, there was already a special section devoted to the work of Alexis Wright, edited by Belinda Wheeler (33.1). And then, fortuitously, an opportunity to publish a special section on the topic of Southeast Asian Diasporic literature in Australia emerged from a Modern Language Association convention session that AAALS cosponsored (33.2). With volume 34, a pattern established itself, with a featured writer in the first issue of the volume and a special topic in the second. In this first issue of volume 34, Peter Mathews has edited the featured writer section about Brian Castro, and following, Eva Rueschmann is editing a special topic on film in Australia and New Zealand. Peter and Eva are both long-term members of AAALS, and so the journal is interacting now more closely with its supporting organization. For volume 35, two more AAALS members will guest edit special sections, Barbara Hoffmann, with a focus on Christos Tsolkias, and Per Henningsgaard, on the topic of book publishing. These guest editors expand my editorial role with diversity of interest and expertise, and it gives all of us the opportunity to work together in producing the journal.

As an editor, I have also realized the importance of the publisher, and I have been fortunate to inherit a relationship with Wayne State University Press, first with Tara Reeser and now with Julie Warheit. In addition to all the elements and stages of production, we work together on the aesthetics of the journal, including its famous cover art. You may have noticed that the cover art now reflects the special topic of the issue, beginning with a telephone-booth photo that inspired Alexis Wright and now with a graciously shared painting of Brian Castro. The section also now has gray edges in the print edition. With a few volumes out, I am now starting to have fun as an editor, and I think that's important too!

Editors, like writers, depend on readers, so thank you for reading *Antipodes*. As we monitor readership, you can vote with your "clicks" on articles in your electronic edition or on JSTOR and Project MUSE or anywhere you find our publications. Consider submitting your own work for review and publication, or offer your services to review books or serve as an anonymous peer reviewer. Contact me at antipode@hawaii.edu with queries, suggestions, and comments.

As editor of this particular journal, I have an additional *kuleana*, which will always appear in this column, on behalf of the writers and staff who produced it. We acknowledge the Native Hawaiian and Native American peoples on whose

rightful lands many of us live and work. We acknowledge the elders past, present and future of the Aboriginal and Maori Peoples, paying our respects to these traditional owners on whose lands we work, and whose culture and literature are often the objects of our study.

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