

Introduction: Bridging

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This special issue of the *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* on “Bridging” unites the dauntingly multifaceted nature of academia today. Graduate students and tenured faculty alike are taking on new topics, new texts, new techniques, and new tech as we all approach the difficulties of the modern job market. This issue not only demonstrates these new intriguing intersections, but it also challenges the traditional genre boundaries to include reviews of unique projects of cultural engagement, discussions of the role of the Digital Humanities in the modern PhD, and conference works recognized for excellence. Following the tradition of past issues, the theme of this journal mirrors the editorial board’s ongoing partnership with the annual Craft, Critique, and Culture Graduate Student Conference (CCC) at the University of Iowa, by not only complimenting the Conference theme, “Bridging Divides,” but also by detailing the keynote speeches and selected works of recognition in our final section. Unlike past publications, this issue addresses the way we bridge content and form through three unique sections: peer reviewed articles, book and project reviews, and conference proceedings.

The first section considers new ways of reading old materials and genres. For instance, Jennifer Shook engages literary and cultural criticism with information theory in order to examine the various ways that poetic “hacking” can influence cultural memory. Michael Germana demonstrates how new materials, such as Ralph Ellison’s unfinished manuscript, *Three Days Before the Shooting*, and a collection of his Polaroid photographs, transform our perception of Ellison’s work. Together, these articles reveal how new archives influence otherwise familiar narratives.

Similarly, the second section of this issue attempts to build “bridges” between old texts and new ideas through book and project reviews that self-consciously consider the layers of scholarly labor and publication. The first two

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reviews examine recent critical and creative works, while the third review details the endeavors of an artistic partnership between Detroit and Zimbabwe. Together these contributions find new ways of seeing and interpreting familiar tropes through new forms and collaborations.

The final section surveys the work of graduate students and early career scholars at the Annual CCC Graduate Student Conference, including brief reviews of the keynote and plenary addresses by Dr. Jerome McGann and Dr. Tom Keegan. This section and issue ends by honoring the work of two graduate scholars: Alex Ashland and Makayla Steiner. Their presentations and essays were nominated by their peers for scholarly excellence and selected by the editorial board for the *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* for recognition in this issue.

As the editor of this journal, I want to congratulate all of the wonderful authors and conference participants on their excellent work over the past year, which made the construction of this issue not only possible, but also exciting. Despite the looming shadows of University budget crises and tentative job prospects, the writers, scholars, and instructors I encountered as editor embraced the uncertainty of these times with a zealous curiosity and a passion for uniting, or building “bridges” within their community.