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From the Review Desk

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Book and New Media Reviews

From the Review Desk

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Summer is here, and with it comes time for reflection and planning. Yet while I attempt to reflect on the academic advancements and professional affiliations of my field, I find that my attention and heart are constantly drawn to those who have lived through a year of suffering—tsunamis, earthquakes, flooding, tornados, extreme heat waves, and bitter winters. These are the issues that I would like to engage students with, asking such questions as “what is civic engagement in a time of natural disasters and national tragedy?” and “how can we critically engage with our communities (a skill that requires distance) while working in our communities to affect change?”

And then the reviews started to come by my desk, and the timing could not have been better.

Elizabeth Miller, Anne Wheeler, and Stephanie White came together to write this issue’s keyword essay “Reciprocity.” In it, they remind us that community literacy and community engagement are unsustainable as an altruistic, one way relationship wherein we go into the community and give them our all. We—instructors, students, administrators—must gain something in return. In other words, true reciprocity needs to be thought through in a community-based curriculum in order for it to be successful for all involved. This keywords essay is followed by Stephanie White’s review of *Going Public: What Writing Programs Learn from Engagement*, a collection of essays gathered together and edited by Shirley Rose and Irwin Weiser. This body of research is an excellent interjection into the research on community literacy work, theorizing both what communities gain from our participation with them and what academic institutions gain in return. Following this review, Mariana Grohowski examines Adela Licon’s documentary work, emphasizing the contact zones of the privileged spaces of academia and the lived literacies of particular communities. And finally, in the continued theme of reciprocity, Elisabeth Miller’s review of *Gravyland: Writing Beyond the Curriculum in the City of Brotherly Love* by Stephen Parks focuses on the intersection of cultural studies, critical pedagogy, and rhetoric and composition to reflect on a number of community literacy partnerships.

Thanks to the careful scholarship being conducted by contributors to this journal and others worldwide, this research is being made available at an astounding rate. As such, we encourage you to contact us about a book, documentary, or alternative medium that you have read/watched/participated in that would interest readers of this journal. Further, since we are currently unable to keep up with the rate of publication, we have instituted a keywords essay—a short five-to-seven-page synthesis that brings together multiple contemporary sources on a single topic. If you are interested in contributing to the Book and New Media Review section with either a review or a keywords essay, please contact me at jdewinter@wpi.edu.

Also visit <http://www.communityliteracy.org/index.php/clj/pages/view/reviews>.