

Richard Saunders

## Editor's Note

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This issue of *RBM* has triple significance. First, it presents a group of written renditions from a recent conference about “silences” in libraries, archives, and museums—about the hidden presence of overlooked or marginalized populations among the collections of mainstream institutions. Let’s admit it to ourselves fairly: generally our collections do not represent our communities as effectively as they might; the human and social experience of many minorities exist as little or nothing more than gaps in our cultural-heritage collections. The articles here, drawn from presentations made at the conference in Philadelphia titled *Silences in the LAMs: Digital Surrogacy in the Time of Pandemic*, bring into the literature compelling comments about seeking and bringing to light marginalized or subaltern populations hidden in the historical record. Much of the administrative work for this issue was done by guest editor Beth Lander. As journal editor, I hope you will come away from reading the issue with a question forming in your own mind of how silences in your own collection might begin being filled, or what silenced voices or images might be hidden within it.

Second, I’m pleased to announce that *RBM* content should soon begin appearing indexed in the *Directory of Open Access Journals*. The content will remain accessible in the journal’s site, of course, but being in the index is a nice way to add value and exposure internationally. Within the past year, article submissions have come from reader/contributors in India, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe as well as Britain, Canada, and of course the United States. Keep ’em coming, folks.

The third point significant about this issue is that, for the first time (I think), readers will find no book reviews between its printed covers. This was an editorial decision taken to free up space for the conference content. Thankfully, the thematic issue coincides with more than a year of planning by the editorial staff and approved by *RBM*’s editorial board to launch and populate a new “reviews portal” on the *RBM* website.

Last spring my Editor’s Note observed that creation of a digital portal provides a platform for expanding the number of reviews the journal can publish. It also allows the journal to place reviews before readers much more quickly than print ever could. The portal appears as a new tab labeled <Reviews> among the navigation

tabs at the top of the screen. Readers will find there a list of citations that serve as links to individual reviews, arranged alphabetically by author surname and naming the reviewer. *RBM* will continue publishing reviews very selectively in print, but the journal's readers should understand clearly that neither the reviews published digitally nor the digital platform are second-rank options. All reviews must pass editorial muster before publication. Digital publication constitutes publication in the journal, something many professional journals now exploit regularly to broaden and deepen their own content.

As I mentioned in the last issue, establishing a digital review portal accomplishes several purposes. First, it provides a platform that can make available a larger number of reviews to readers at a very low cost to ACRL. This allows the journal to be more responsive to publishing in the field within the limited budget ALA has established for the journal. Prior to this point, issues of *RBM* have published between two and five reviews. The portal will allow as many as four or five times that number annually. Unlike the journal issued twice annually, new reviews will appear on the portal several times a year as they are completed and the editors accept content for publication.

Second, the larger number of reviews opens space for greater opportunities for emerging professionals to engage with their field in a professionally recognized way. The new opportunity necessarily forces the journal to change some of its editorial practices. There is now much more traffic across the Reviews Editor's desk. That means the number of reviewers needed has increased. The editors invite you to volunteer as a reviewer, new folks as well as old hands. The reviews portal tab includes a link for submitting your contact information and review interests.

Third, the portal's growing content provides a platform for easily locating book reviews in special collections librarianship and cultural heritage. Single reviews may be read online or downloaded at will without having to hunt through issue after issue. As reviews accumulate, the reviews portal provides a means of collating reviews in a single location for easy reference.

There are enough publications in the world that we cannot possibly review all of them, but the journal has come one step closer to doing that, at least. Thanks to the good work of ACRL staff liaison David Free, by the time this issue reaches you, the first reviews will populate the new reviews portal.

<http://rbm.acrl.org>

Go see what's there for you.