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"Does It Count?" and "Who Can Speak?": An Interdependent Model of Knowledge-Production in Public and Traditional Scholarship

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This article presents a model of public scholarship in which the knowledge-generation binary in traditional and public scholarship can and does blur, even dissolve, through interdependent partnerships. The author analyzes the overlapping issues of authority and voice between the scholarship of community-engaged research and the discipline of English through an ongoing public scholarship project with a local African American museum to reinsert African American experiences into U.S. history. Because community partners' voices are critical to this historical work, this eleven-year collaboration illuminates issues of authority and knowledge-making, such as who can speak, for whom, for what purposes, and to what ends, in both the scholarship of identity politics and public scholarship.

Keywords: public scholarship, knowledge-production, academic research, collaboration, faculty reward system, community partners' voices

Introduction

The collaboration between the Central Pennsylvania African American Museum (CPAAM) and Penn State Berks, initiated by the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) President, began in 2005. The goal of this collaboration was researching, uncovering, documenting, and disseminating African American history in Berks County, Pennsylvania. When CPAAM founder and Board Chair Frank Gilyard publicly announced the project at the 18th annual local NAACP Freedom Fund Banquet in November 2005, he asked the audience to support the growth of the museum, pleading, "Let us tell our own story" (Grobman, 2009, p. 129). Then he introduced me as the team leader of the partnership project. A Caucasian scholar-teacher, I stood before the mostly African American audience and felt what I had already known: "Anytime a White person assumes a position of authority in a community space that is used primarily by communities of color, problems of legitimacy, intention and practice emerge" (Zimmer, 2007, p. 13 as quoted in Grobman, 2009, p. 130). The "community space" was both the physical banquet room and the more abstract, yet equally real, erased local histories of African Americans (Grobman, 2009, p. 130).

More than a decade later, this moment remains among the most transformative in my career. It was the first time I experienced whether and when it is valid to speak for others in the production of texts outside classroom walls and textual boundaries. It was a profound moment for a scholar. Who really had the expertise in that room? Who should, or should not, speak? In this moment, the questions of authority, voice, and knowledge-production in my own discipline met and merged with the newly formed field of public scholarship.

"Who Can Speak?" asks Roof and Weigman (1995) in the title to their collection, *Who Can Speak? Authority and Critical Identity*, referring to questions about identity and critical authority postulated in academic discourses taking place in literary studies, rhetoric and composition, cultural studies, communication studies, philosophy, history, women's studies, African American

studies, and many more disciplines. Who is authorized to speak for whom, for what purposes, and under what circumstances, are questions related to the nature and origins of individual and group identity, political views, and mobilization efforts of particular marginalized groups as they challenge and resist dominant structures, definitions, and social positions.

"Does it Count?" asks Perry (2014) in the title of an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, referring to what he describes as "a false dichotomy between peer-reviewed scholarship and public engagement (written or otherwise)," (para. 13) based in part on questions of authority and legitimacy in the production of knowledge. Key principles of community-engaged scholarship, such as collaboration, democratization of knowledge, equity, power-sharing, and reciprocity, challenge the traditional notions of academic research as the best method for garnering the most valuable expertise and creating knowledge. Further, as Stoecker (2003) argues, a crucial objective of community-based research is to "undermin[e] the power structure that currently places control of knowledge production in the hands of credentialized experts" (p. 36).

This article analyzes these overlapping issues of authority and voice between the scholarship of community-engaged research and the discipline of English, and argues that the knowledge-generation binary in traditional and public scholarship can and does blur, even dissolve, in interdependent partnerships. This ongoing public scholarship project to reinsert African American experiences into U.S. history, while primarily carried out by Caucasians, by necessity does not reinscribe the structures that effaced such history in the first place. Rather, eleven years and many public scholarship projects later, my understanding of speaking for and with others is multilayered, made more complex and more nuanced by the interrelated concepts of voice, silence (erasure), identity politics, author-ity and author-ship, performance studies, and African American rhetoric. The argument I make here summarizes and cites from previously published scholarship as I analyze the trajectory of my own knowledge transformation. These insights would not have happened without the partnership and the very specific knowledge contributions of Frank and Mildred Gilyard, and the hundreds of community members who shared their stories and experiences. Thus, this lengthy collaboration illuminates issues of authority and knowledge-making—who can speak, for whom, for what purposes, and to what ends—in both the scholarship of identity politics and public scholarship.

Traditional Research and Public Scholarship: Moving Beyond the Dichotomy

As Rice (2002) states, "There are faculty members across the country and across disciplines who are deeply committed to community-based research and who see the need for engagement as researchers in the larger community but feel restrained by the dominant view of what counts as legitimate scholarship" (p. 15). Time after time, from national conferences to on-campus meetings, faculty across the disciplines express this frustration, asserting that the research which most interests them and to which they are committed does not "translate" into community engaged research. Further, they claim that even though public scholarship may interest them, they simply cannot substitute their "real" research—that which counts in the faculty reward system—for work that offers them no external reward.

The dichotomous understanding of "what counts as research" needlessly hinders public scholarship's impact in communities beyond our campuses. Boyte's (2002) research suggests that across universities, individual faculty and whole departments are interested in "more public relevance" but that "cultural norms reinforce silence about these issues" (p. 3). Yet, embracing public

scholarship as research that rewards faculty "requires enormous change within higher education" (Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco, & Swanson, 2012, p. 11). As Boyte (2002) observes, "to create serious change at a research university requires change in the culture and *understandings of research*" (p. 7, emphasis added).

Among the changes necessary in "understandings of research" is the persistent problem of who generates knowledge and what types of knowledge-generation "count"—in the academy and in our communities.

> In community-based research, the scholarship of engagement calls for a realignment of local and cosmopolitan knowledge. Pure research that is objective, abstract, and analytical is most highly valued and has legitimacy because it can be peer-reviewed by cosmopolitan colleagues, independent of place. Community-based research is of necessity local—rooted in a particular time and setting. The most knowledgeable peers might well be representatives of the local community and not of the academy. Community-based research calls for shared expertise and challenges established academic criteria. It also needs to be collaborative and requires that the learning be multidirectional, not university-centered and campus-bound. (Rice, 2002, p. 14-15).

The scholarship of engagement builds on the strengths and resources of the community and community members, and "validates multiple sources of knowledge and promotes the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination of the knowledge produced" (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003, p. 6). To be effective, this collaboration requires a fundamental sharing of authority and the democratization of knowledge—everyone is a researcher, a teacher, and a learner.

Public scholarship challenges the notion of academic expertise and the aims of research as the most valuable knowledge in higher education institutions. Public scholars agree that societal problems are complex in more ways than can be easily solved by academia alone. All stakeholders have specific kinds of expertise and bring valuable lines of inquiry to the table. Most issues or matters of significance are multi-disciplinary with multiple perspectives. However, academia tends to silo and narrowly specialize disciplinary knowledge. Moreover, the primary aim of traditional academic research is to further disciplinary knowledge, and even when there are social implications, dissemination is usually internal through peer-reviewed journals and presses. Community-based research aims to address complex real-world issues by advancing knowledge and involving various stakeholders in the research process (Nyden, 2003, p. 576).

Since Boyer's (1990) groundbreaking *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* attempted to expand what "counts" in colleges and universities as a contribution to knowledge, little change has taken place regarding "what counts as research" in the reward structure (Rice, 2002, p. 14), even though the "scholarship of engagement" is beginning to "generat[e] a major upsurge of interest and serious reconceptualization" (p. 11). Francis, Corbett, and Magarrey (2012), replicating Boyer's work in *Scholarship Reconsidered*, found that "publishing still maintains a significant role in decision-making about tenure and promotion" (p. 38). That is, the norms and values of academic research remain entrenched.

There are many reasons for this slow pace of change in the understandings of scholarly research; most prominent among them is that faculty, even more so than the administration, hold

tightly to traditions related to "who defines the research issues, how research is done, and how research outcomes are used" (Nyden, 2003, p. 576). For the most part, those involved in assessing faculty for promotion and tenure as well as merit raises count "articles published," "papers presented," and "grants received," and not "impact on the local community or the region" (p. 578). Few guardians of academic awards have an assessment column titled "contribution to the improved quality of life in the local community" (p. 588). Perry (2014) likewise states that faculty "snobbery" continues to delimit public engagement as scholarly work and note that in many, if not most, colleges and universities, it is the faculty, not the administration, who control promotion and tenure policies. Again, community-engaged scholarship "challenges basic assumptions about knowledge itself: what constitutes valid knowledge, how it is best produced (and by whom), and who should control it" (Strand, et al., 2003, p. 7).

Several public scholars have tried to address this counterproductive binary of public and traditional scholarship. Jay (2010), Nyden (2003), and Bridger and Alter (2006) argue for mutually informing perspectives on the production of knowledge and its impact and dissemination. Jay (2010), arguing that we must not "cede the ground of 'research' or 'scholarship' to others," stresses demonstrating that "engagement IS research and scholarship, though it is also much more" (p. 58). Nyden (2003) views public scholarship similarly: "it is consumed not hidden; it presents solutions to complex problems that traditional research fails to provide; and it is profoundly impactful" (p. 580); in other words, community-engaged research is "traditional research and then some" (p. 580). Bridger and Alter (2006) argue for a "complementary" view of public scholarship and traditional research that promotes the development *of* the community; that is, collaborative building of community capacity. This orientation requires that faculty "embrace their role as citizen and expert simultaneously" (p. 172) and "see their work as contributing to the development of community by consciously focusing on civic renewal while also providing expert advice and assistance" (Bridger & Alter, 2006, p. 172). This view of community-engaged scholarship "addresses important civic issues while simultaneously producing knowledge that meets high academic standards" (Bridger & Alter, 2006, p. 174) and brings academics "into public space and public relationships in order to facilitate knowledge discovery, learning, and action relevant to civic issues and problems" (Peters et al., 2003, p. 76 as quoted in Bridger & Alter, 2006, p. 174).

The case analysis I present below enacts this complementarity. In the local African American history partnership under study, community knowledge and academic knowledge are produced interdependently and collaboratively. This study illustrates the collaborative, reciprocal, and interdependent nature of disciplinary knowledge-production as community partners contribute critical, academic, and disciplinary knowledge-producing work in advancing rich new perspectives of the issues of speaking—to, for, and with. Providing new perspectives on authority and voice, this partnership affirms the value of public scholarship in the production of knowledge.

Partnership, Pedagogy, and Collaborative Knowledge-Production

Scholarship on issues related to voice, authority, representation, power, and race is not new. However, the body of "traditional" scholarship in my discipline, English studies, looks different than the interdependent model of public and traditional scholarship I present in this article. Throughout my career as a scholar-teacher in English, I have investigated issues and theoretical perspectives on multiculturalism and social justice in both the production and consumption of texts. I have theorized issues related to canon debates and literary value; the notion of hybridity in

literature by writers of color; the difference paradox in its many manifestations; border crossing of racial lines; cross-racial texts, cultural appropriation, and cultural exchange; and much more.

In an example from my own text-based literary scholarship, I analyzed *The Secret Life of Bees* (2002) by White author Sue Monk Kidd from the perspective of racial crossings in both elite and popular art forms in the U.S. Within that analysis (Grobman 2008), I noted Susan Gubar's (1997) important assertion that argues, "when whites perform Blackness,' grotesque stereotyping and appropriation too often result (p. xiv), because whites 'consum[e] (cannibalize) the Other (p. xxi)"' (Grobman, 2008, p. 11). "Gubar illustrates the extent to which what she terms 'racechanges'—racial crossings, racial impersonations, racial mimicries, passing, and mutuality—have been prevalent in both elite and popular art forms in the 19th and 20th centuries" (Grobman, 2008, p. 24). In *The Secret Life of Bees*, the central character is a fourteen-year old White girl named Lily, who narrates the novel. As I argued, "like so many literary characters before her, she is transformed by and through the Black women and their community and culture. The Black women's stories are filtered not only through their white creator, but also through Lily's narrative consciousness" (p. 10). I argued that texts like *The Secret Life of Bees* "engage in the worst kind of cultural pilfering" and "harm and degrade the black culture and community" (p. 12). I also suggested Kidd's appropriation might enable a cross-racial female conversation with rich teaching and learning potential both in spite of and because of these flaws (p. 11).

Earlier in my career, I was part of a group of scholar-teachers in literary studies, composition, and rhetoric who began to reconceive writing as social justice work. The classroom became an acknowledged political site, although how to manage that cross-cultural site as a means for social justice was, and remains, daunting. More recently, calls to bring social justice work beyond the classroom walls reverberated throughout the humanities and English, as the call for public relevance in higher education more generally intensified and public intellectuals debated the role of the humanities and English in the *New York Times* and in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. However, as Duffey (2011) observes, the disciplinary identity of English "oftentimes . . . work[s] against community involvement and public scholarship" (p. 47).

I became involved with service-learning in literature classes during the early 2000s. From that time on, I and other teacher-scholars have argued that these courses offer new questions and answers about the language, structure, and meaning of literature, criticism, and theory. These courses promote in students a genuine understanding and sense of social responsibility and civic commitment, and they have a positive impact in the community. For the past decade, I turned my attention to the collaborative production of texts through the *(Re)Writing Local Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Histories* projects in which students, faculty, and community partners uncover, recover, and preserve underrepresented stories of racial, ethnic, and cultural history in the city of Reading and Berks County, Pennsylvania. This work highlights issues of authority and voice in the production of knowledge in both community and scholarly outcomes.

The Central Pennsylvania African American Museum (CPAAM) in Reading has partnered with me and/or my students seven times since 2005, most recently in the spring 2015 semester. CPAAM is one of an estimated 140 museums dedicated to African American history, life, culture, and art in the United States (Fairchild, 2008, p. 6). CPAAM is a nonprofit corporation operated by a Board of Directors, with more than 600 items in its collection. A collector-based museum, CPAAM opened in October 1998 with approximately 200 pieces from the personal collection of its founder, Frank L. Gilyard. Under the guidance of Frank Gilyard, his wife, Mildred Gilyard, and several other determined volunteers, they established CPAAM independent from any govern-

mental bodies. The museum is located in the Old Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest Black-owned church building in Reading, a registered landmark and a stop on the historical Underground Railroad. Frank Gilyard led CPAAM for 15 years, until his death at the age of 82 in 2013. Mildred Gilyard assumed the position of the Chairwoman of the Board of Directors after her husband's death. She and I have continued the partnership, and I am a member of the Board of Directors and Co-Chair of the Historical Research Committee.

These public scholarship projects with CPAAM have produced several printed books, websites, and a documentary on local African American history. Several hundred topics have been researched and preserved, from slavery to civil rights to the ordinary lives of community members. They are an indispensable remediation to the local historical record, which is largely white, male, and affluent. History is "selective," as Olneck (2001) suggests: "It excludes as well as includes, forgets as well as remembers, hides as well as places in view" (p. 335). As I argued in a previous publication,

> Historical memory and narratives construct past and present social positions and legitimate current practices. But telling new stories and constructing different memories challenges and resists exclusionary ideologies. Rewriting history is more than telling the same story a new way; it is re-orienting (Grobman, 2009, p. 133).

That is also when I came across renowned historian Lerner's (1997) argument that the recovery, preservation, and dissemination of previously marginalized, erased, and/or distorted histories are by their very nature social justice acts. Lerner (1997) states:

> To those in power, history has always mattered . . . Selective memory and the distortion of history have long been the powerful tools of oppressive regimes . . . whenever subordinate groups have come to power they have tried to define and recover their history. This oft-repeated process testifies in its own way to the deeply felt need for a history of formerly oppressed people (p. 202-06).

Frank Gilyard often pointed to the need for African American history to be included in American historical narratives, including in his interview with me on July 11, 2012: "The Black community here in Berks County needs to know our history because if you don't know the history of where you were born and raised it's something missing from your life . . . People in our community forget where they came from . . . History tells me where we have come."

From a disciplinary perspective, this public scholarship work immerses students, community partners, and myself in pragmatic, ethical, and theoretical questions of discourse, race, power, and history. These public scholarship projects have generated new knowledge, produced in collaborative, mutually informing research endeavors. This research is shedding light on voice and authority in connection with daunting disciplinary questions, including authorship and collaboration; narrative, history, and public memory; rhetorical agency and narrative control; and multiculturalism.

In the Banquet Room and Historical Space: Who Can Speak?

The initial partnership with CPAAM aimed to research, uncover, document, and dissemi-

nate African American history in Berks County to the public. Our extensive research included using documentary evidence, such as photographs, newspapers, and advertisements for runaway slaves; examining aspects of material culture, including architecture and housing, industry, domestic and vernacular arts, and artifacts speaking to ethnic and cultural identity; and conducting interviews with Frank Gilyard and nearly 50 other community members. Many months of work culminated with printing a 126-page volume of short essays and compilations of facts called *Woven with Words: A Collection of African American History in Berks County, Pennsylvania*, and the creation of a corresponding website.

As I stood before the audience in the banquet room listening to Gilyard's passionate plea to "tell our own story," the academic concept, "the problem of speaking for others," as Linda Alcoff (1991) calls it, came to the fore. The four faculty participants are White; 15 of the 18 students who participated in the historical research and writing are White; and the four students who created the website are White. The question, though not the answer, was clear: Were the Caucasian faculty and students in the project *speaking for* Berks County's African Americans and the students of color?

By that time, I had already regularly crossed cultures as I researched and taught literature by writers of color, as well as ethnic studies. I had agonized, taught, researched, theorized, and published from many vantage points the "problem of speaking for others" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 5). When individuals from a privileged or dominant group speak for individuals from an oppressed group, or for the group itself, the speakers may—and often do—reinforce the marginalization of that group (p. 7). As Alcoff (1991) suggests, one's social location is "epistemically salient," and "certain privileged locations are discursively dangerous" (p. 6-7). I agreed then and now with the perspective that "identity-based academic programs such as ethnic studies" produce "better, more truthful and less distorted scholarship on the lives and experiences of marginalized identity groups . . . when the faculty in the academy itself became more diverse" (Alcoff & Mohanty, 2006, p. 2). However, I am confident that teaching literature by writers of color and a course in African American studies with the official university title of "The African American Woman" is appropriate and urgent in my relatively small college with few African American faculty. I still embrace Joyce's (2005) assertion that while an instructor's race is one important criterion for African American students in mostly White universities, White faculty who teach in Black Studies "must understand that Blacks', Whites' and other peoples' of color thought patterns have been shaped by racism and that these patterns have been shaped differently" (p. 52). Rather, I have put a great deal of work into teaching across racial boundaries sensitively, responsibly, and knowledgeably.

Like Alcoff (1991), I suggest there are legitimate reasons for speaking for others, and that to "simply retreat from all practices of speaking for" others substantially "undercuts the possibility of political effectivity" (p. 17); we must simultaneously "analyze the probable or actual effects of the words on the discursive and material context" (p. 26 as quoted in Grobman, 2009, p. 140). I asserted then and remain steadfast in my belief that collaboration on a local African American History project approached a model of community-based research in which Caucasian and African Americans spoke (and wrote) with one another, having created "the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking with and to rather than speaking for others" (Alcoff, 1991, p. 25 as quoted in Grobman, 2009, p. 131). CPAAM partners and I have communicated openly and candidly about race, racism, and cross-racial historical writing. While partners have declined to contribute as writers in the academic scholarship aspect of multiple projects, the community participants have still provided their perspectives through numerous interviews.

For *Woven With Words*, I conducted a group interview, which became more like a five-

person conversation among myself, Robert Jefferson, who was the primary liaison between the NAACP and my institution, Frank Gilyard, and two individuals whom I will refer to as Williams and Johnson (they preferred anonymity).[1] I summarized these important findings in a previous publication, and they are worth reiterating here. The interviews revealed that Jefferson, Gilyard, Williams, and Johnson all agreed that African Americans should tell their own histories because African American history has been ignored, erased, and/or obscured in this nation's master narratives. Gilyard and Jefferson stressed their viewpoint that the only daily newspaper in the area, *The Reading Eagle*, has grossly distorted Berks County's African American history. Jefferson, Gilyard, and Williams knew that by seeking out my institution as a collaborator, they would be reaching out to predominantly White faculty and students. While not realizing how few faculty of color worked at Penn State Berks, they had expected to have some non-White faculty participation. Jefferson was gratified that Penn State Berks was so willing to partner and they viewed the collaboration as a significant opportunity. Williams echoed those views, "We needed a formal project to make this happen . . . we wanted [our local history] documented, [and] this was a way to make it happen" (Grobman 2009, p. 138-139).

However, as I reported in an earlier article, Johnson was very emphatic that "most African Americans are skeptical of Whites telling our stories" since "Whites have always been in control of history, even today . . . Our story is not told." Johnson added that there are "still a lot of naysayers" in the local community who are upset that *Woven with Words* had been written primarily by Whites. Furthermore, during the review process we dealt with conflict from NAACP board members over one book chapter. Some board members were insisting that a substantial piece of one article be deleted, as this section focused on the efforts of a White man to create a baseball field for inner-city youth. Thus, we were left with many unanswered questions. "One group's history rarely happens in isolation, but must its telling always include all parties? May a group have its *own* history? Does telling one group's history inevitably distort or erase another's?" (Grobman, 2009 p. 152). One thing was clear: the "theoretical understanding of such concepts as hybridity, border-crossing, and blurring of group-based differences and identities do not necessarily occur in practice.; rather, the Black-white binary, sometimes for very good reasons, does not dissolve" (p. 131). It was this mix of great outcomes (the book, the collaboration, the relationships, the student learning) and the challenges of speaking across racial boundaries that propelled us to partner several times over the next few years, aware that the challenges we faced together were critical to larger issues of race relations, cross-cultural communities, and working across racial lines to address lingering wrongs.

Sharing the Stage and Speaking With

Over several years, I learned more about Frank Gilyard's life and the establishment of the museum, and I was struck by the cross-racial, cross-cultural rhetorical nature of the process through which CPAAM was established. This was collaborative knowledge-production in action, outside the purview of academia, as diverse groups and individuals came together to found CPAAM, an endeavor which Gilyard had been working on for years. When I approached Gilyard about wanting to research and write the history of CPAAM, I explained that in my view, in addition to preserving and publicizing CPAAM's history as local Black history itself, CPAAM should have a place in the burgeoning stories of African American museums. I also explained I would simultaneously study the same historical information through a rhetorical lens for my scholarly research, and then

I again invited Gilyard to join my efforts by writing with me and/or by contributing through interviews. Gilyard was eager to participate, sharing all of the materials he had kept for two decades and agreeing to several hours of interviews.

There is no doubt that in every phase of this public scholarship and traditional research project, Gilyard and I were knowledge authorities in different yet interdependent ways. I had the Ph.D. and expertise in rhetoric and writing studies; Gilyard possessed the theoretical understanding (without thinking of it as theoretical understanding) gleaned through lived experience. In one of the early interviews, Gilyard opened my eyes to new understandings of cross-racial discourse and led me down a new scholarly path: the rhetorical performance of Blackness. "Gilyard told me he hoped to write an autobiography that he would title 'It's Hard To Be a Negro'" (Grobman, 2013, p. 302). As he explained,

> My title is because I'm pretending. *I'm on a stage*–the door has been opened more for me, for my people, than what it was when I first was brought into this world. That I know and I appreciate that, but sometimes it wasn't easy because you want to retaliate. But you didn't retaliate because you wanted to survive . . . It's hard when a person tells you "You know, the last time we hung a nigger was in 1920" and you were in a uniform willing to die for them (4 June 2010, emphasis added).

Gilyard told me about two personal experiences in which he pretended a self by performing a White-constructed Blackness. It became all too clear that for most of his life, Gilyard performed *for* Whites in order to survive, by carefully studying their behaviors and monitoring his own, taking note of the circumstances, location, and environment. Further, in both situations, Frank Gilyard was aware that he was performing: "I pretended, to survive." In other words, even while speaking, he was being spoken for by Whites.

E. P. Johnson asserts that "Blackness" *is* rhetorical performance. African Americans "construct blackness within and outside black American culture" in ways that are "contingent on the historical moment in which [they] live and [their] ever-shifting subject positions" (Johnson, 2003 p. 3; Grobman 2013, p. 302). According to Young (2007), "While racial performances may vary among blacks," the "requirement to perform race is pervasive" (p. 3). The particular stage, context and audience, determines allowable racial rhetorical performance. From this perspective, I applied African American rhetorical traditions to an analysis of Gilyard's role as the principal actor in the rhetorical historical processes that led to the establishment of CPAAM. My argument was that the nature of Gilyard's racialized rhetorical performance evolved through these years in such ways that Gilyard exerted a measure of control over the public narrative, undermining White-controlled racialized performance:

> Throughout the founding of CPAAM, Gilyard was on a rhetorical stage, performing for and with whites. At every turn, Gilyard had to appeal to and get the support of white individuals and groups to move the project forward, and he was effective in doing so, as evidenced by the museum's establishment, renovation, and ongoing expansion. Yet, the nature of these racialized rhetorical performances had changed. No longer was he performing a white-controlled blackness in a voice not his own. Rather, navigating through the various audiences, Gilyard, like Royster, was able to construct and to claim ownership of "all [his] voices as [his] own very much

authentic voices" (Royster 37) (Grobman, 2013 p. 305).

I came to understand that Frank Gilyard used our collaboration to move his racialized rhetorical performance into new areas of the public domain. Arguably, he took these stages on his own terms. As part of this research, I wrote a narrative report on the development of CPAAM, which is used as an historical record of the museum as well as a fundraising tool. I believe Gilyard intentionally addressed his public through our interviews. He spoke with me, even through me, and by my very act of speaking shed new theoretical light on Alcoff's (1991) primary claim that "in order to evaluate attempts to speak for others in particular instances, we need to analyze the probable or actual effects of the words on the discursive and material context . . . one must also look at where the speech goes and what it does there" (p. 26). Through my speech, Gilyard took a measure of control over where his speech would go and what it might do there. We co-authorized one another to "speak for" and to "speak with," breaking down, at least for the moment, what often appears as a binary in social justice work.

The Epistemic Value of Voice

Gilyard's sudden death three weeks into the 2013 spring semester required that I think about Gilyard's voice and performances in the collaborative creation of knowledge in new ways. Fourteen students, the interviewer, and an editorial assistant who knew him, collaborated with me on an oral history narrative from 12 hours of previously recorded interviews of Gilyard speaking about his life. However, due to his death, Gilyard's capacity to control the stage—to speak through me—was obviously weakened. It was a tremendous responsibility to enable Gilyard to tell the story he so wanted told, and do so without his continued presence in guiding the collaborative effort.

With undergraduates and other co-authors, I addressed many of these issues in a previously published article in 2015, as summarized below (Grobman, Orr, Meagher, Shelton, & Yatron, 2015). The collaborative production of knowledge between the interviewer and interviewee is a central principle of oral history. Oral history is understood as

> a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people about some aspect of the past considered by them to be of historical significance and intentionally recorded for the record. Although the conversation takes the form of an interview, in which one person—the interviewer—asks questions of another person—variously referred to as the interviewee or narrator—oral history is, at its heart, a dialogue (Shopes, 2002, p. 2-3).

As Zieren (2011) asserts, oral history pedagogy further complicates this dialogue because it typically involves a "triangular relationship between instructor and student, between student and interview subject, and even between instructor and subject" (p. 158). However, in the Frank Gilyard oral history project, the students did not conduct the interviews with Gilyard, did not even know him, and could not follow through with Gilyard to fill in the gaps and clarify what we may have misinterpreted, thus complicating the dilemmas of representation. Jones (2004) argues that review by the narrator is "standard practice" for oral history (p. 34) and in so doing, he or she "continue[s] to construct the narrative" (p. 36). Further, editors and researchers must not use their status to disempower narrators (p. 37), so we had to be vigilant about the unequal power dynamic

exacerbated due to Gilyard's passing. His voice was limited to the transcript and our interpretation of the transcript. Our guiding principle was to pay careful attention to the epistemic value of Gilyard's voice in the written narrative; in that way, we would retain the collaborative production of knowledge central to oral history, to social justice work, and to community-engaged scholarship.

Fundamental to the collaborative class oral history project, as emphasized in our article (Grobman et al., 2015), was the notion of "joint construction" (Jones, 2004, p. 24). In her oral history research article, Jones discusses her work as writer/editor of *Blended Voices: Kingston Residents Tell Their Stories of Migration* (City of Kingston, 2001), a book based on oral history interviews with migrants living in the Kingston area of Melbourne, Australia. Jones argues that "editing, extracting, refining, and rearranging the transcript" is "part of the joint construction of a narrative by both the narrator and the writer/oral historian in which a public text is created from a private one-to-one conversation" (p. 24). *Blended Voices* (2001) is largely a group of first person narratives, mainly in English, except for ten of the stories, which are reproduced both in English and in the narrator's native language. Jones, who was historian, interviewer, editor, and writer, turned the transcripts into a written narrative, what she calls the "edited story" (Jones, 2001, p. 27). The consensus among my students and myself was that Jones had gone too far in the direction of erasing her narrators' voices (Grobman et al, 2015, p. 4-6).

This was the starting point for students' efforts to understand the significance of retaining Gilyard's voice in our narrative of his life and the problematic situation of "speaking for" an African American man who had spent his life finding ways to speak on his own terms. Unable to negotiate with him as we proceeded, and unwilling to consult the family while in mourning, I orchestrated our work around Marino's (2005) assertion that "when we speak for others we must be careful not to remove agency from the other, and force upon them our definition of who they are" (p. 35). By paying attention to Gilyard's voice, especially including his use of African American vernacular and rhetorical conventions, we interpreted and conveyed his story in a way that we hoped would empower his legacy. As the students write in a published article (2015),

> From Garner and Calloway-Thomas's (2003) "African American Orality: Expanding Rhetoric" we learned "the space between the rhetorical practices of African Americans and the landscape of African American orality" (44) is critical to understanding Gilyard's narratives. We were able to link many of the features and characteristics of an African American oral tradition to Gilyard's voice, in particular, the "unrehearsed" quality of Gilyard's storytelling (50), such as when Gilyard abruptly changed the topic from boot camp, to a dispute he he'd had with a fellow soldier, to a discussion of running in the heat. Sometimes we lost track of where he was going with his stories, but we came to realize why this "improvisation" (50) was such a profound feature of the recordings. In the end, we are confident that we honored Gilyard's voice to the extent possible under the circumstances (Grobman et al., 2015, p. 16).

They further pointed to Shopes's (2002) claim that

> during the interview, "the voice of the narrator literally contends with that of the historian for control of the story." At this point in the collaboration, we viewed our work to retain Gilyard's voice as cooperation, not control. We struggled to keep the

> group's voice cohesive and readable while attempting to blend it with Gilyard's to ensure that his voice was the dominant presence. It was through this spirit of cooperation as the students were writing that we retained Gilyard's voice and honored his memory, continuing his work to add African Americans to the U.S. historical narrative (Grobman et al., 2015, p. 14).

I believe Frank Gilyard would respect the students' work and the efforts made to retain his voice as essential to dismantling knowledge binaries.

Public Scholarship and the Ongoing CPAAM-Penn State Berks Partnership

Issues of authority, voice, collaboration, and knowledge-generation continue to permeate the ongoing partnership between CPAAM and Penn State Berks. We have recently completed a history project based on student interviews with 22 African Americans who lived in Reading and Berks County during the Civil Rights Movement. The interviews elicited the Civil Rights Movement experiences of these individuals, from their recollections of seeing and hearing about the major milestone events; discussions about these events and their meaning and implications with family, friends, fellow church members, co-workers, and others; their participation in any civil rights activities on the national, state, and local level; reflections on the Civil Rights Movement then and as well as its present implications; and anything else they wanted to share.

Students, community members, and I collectively researched, wrote, preserved, and shared a history of the Civil Rights Movement as experienced by African American members of the local community. *Through the Eyes of Local African Americans: Reflections on the Civil Rights Movement in Reading and Berks County, Pennsylvania* is our attempt to "glean from personal testimony the movement of history" (Fields, 1994, p. 106). This nearly 30,000 word manuscript was drawn together primarily from oral histories, but we also utilized the limited historical information documented on the Civil Rights Movement in Reading, as experienced by the residents of Reading. Printed in a book that is housed at CPAAM and available on its website, these experiences and reflections add historical documentation of local Black history, and add to the body of historical work that addresses the Civil Rights Movement in Northern states and towns.

The issues of authority, expertise, and voice in the scholarly literature of public scholarship and in English studies and oral history were at the forefront of this partnership and project. Mildred Gilyard and I strove to bring community partners into the projects as researchers and writers, to blur the divides in previous projects between community members as oral history narrators and students as writers. That is, I approached "the problem of speaking for others" from a new direction, one that not only valued and maintained the voices of the oral history narrators in the publicly disseminated historical account, but also more thoroughly blended the voices of students and community members to get even closer to the concept of speaking with, not for. Part of the effort in these projects involved bringing students and community partners together in the process before and after the oral history interviews. As students attended and participated in CPAAM committee meetings, and CPAAM partners attended and participated in the classroom, we made significant decisions on this evolving project, from developing and selecting interview questions to organizing the final manuscript.

Presently, two students from the class and I are coauthoring a scholarly article for submission to an academic peer-reviewed journal. Although our community partners chose not to write

with us, they remain eager to provide input and feedback through interviews and review of the draft manuscript. The students and I are carefully examining the dynamics of the partnership, drawing on scholarly work in oral history, rhetoric and composition, African American rhetoric, the rhetorical performance of Blackness, and cross-racial collaboration and identity politics. Furthermore, we are investigating the Civil Rights Movement as experienced in this northern city and in the context of the growing body of work on the Civil Rights Movement in the North. To this body of work, we are adding the voices of 22 individuals who have never been on the public stage. Although still in progress, one of our foci is on the range of editorial changes made by each interviewee on his or her quoted material, that is, the changes the interviewee has made to his or her "interview voice"—and whether those changes impact meaning-making and meaning itself as new stories of the Civil Rights Movement are added to the dominant narrative. Our analyses will influence the design, development, and execution of the next partnership and the issues related to speaking and voice. Re-thinking theory through practice and practice through theory are ongoing and fruitful.

Conclusion

When Duffey (2011) opens her article with the question, "What relationships can English departments have with the communities in which their institutions are located?" and the answer, "Using traditional understandings of the work English departments do, we might say 'not much'" (p. 47), she points to the knowledge dilemma thwarting the promise of public scholarship in English and other disciplines that steadfastly resist it. Yet, Duffey (2011) believes small-scale change is possible, such as in the "one graduate course and the academic and non-academic lives of its students" (p. 60) in her teaching repertoire. My perspective is larger; the interdependent model I offer may persuade faculty that public and traditional scholarship are both/and, not either/or, and that together they enrich knowledge for both communities and disciplines. We must find ways to move past the institutional barrier of "what counts as research" that hinders the impact of community-engaged scholarship in communities beyond our campuses.

While I do not suggest that all public and traditional scholarly research be combined, I do advocate for presenting this interdependent research approach as one valid and accepted approach across disciplines in graduate schools and in promotion and tenure. I came upon this model through trial and error; now, as the coordinator of a community-engaged scholarship program, I attempt to create community-university partnerships to address community needs by involving multidisciplinary faculty and students that simultaneously open up traditional research inquiries. For example, in a newly formed partnership between my college, the City of Reading's Public Works department, and the Olivet Boys & Girls Club, we are collaboratively pursuing a litter reduction plan in Reading's parks. Faculty and students will analyze the litter from an initial park cleanup to determine the percentage of litter collected that is biodegradable, approximate timetable for degradation, and the environmental impact of uncollected litter. The results will be pursued in both academic venues and in the litter reduction strategies developed through the partnership.

Finally, by paying attention to the issues of authority and voice in community-based research partnerships, faculty, students, and community members may obtain deeper understanding and skills that facilitate the democratization of knowledge and communities. We must speak and listen—collaboratively, collectively, and across social and academic divides—so that all of us can enact critical social change. Public scholarship shows us a way.

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Notes

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