

## **Kristin M. Langellier, Editor of *Text & Performance Quarterly*, 1992-1994**

To answer in a narrative' how I became an editor of *Text and Performance Quarterly*. To think retroactively about my life is to write a story from this editorial ending. To frame what would otherwise be an undifferentiated outpouring of life experiences within this conversation among women leaders in the National Communication Association. To ask which moments in my life become turning points and which reconstitute everyday, taken-for-granted moments when things do not change. To recognize that personal narrative involves the work of memory and telling. To realize that doing this narrative work produces visible, special moments--itself a historical, political process that writes women into the discipline. So this is the story of how I got a life as an NCA editor and the life I got.

I teach myself the special moments, the ones that become more important than other moments. I describe myself as a middle child, but what can that mean in a family where fully eight children qualify as the middle? But my being in the middle seemed profound, with three brothers and one sister ahead of me and three brothers and one sister behind, until my late-arriving youngest sister disturbed the symmetry. As the fifth of ten children born to French Catholic parents on a farm in Illinois, I was the oldest of the middle group of three. Perhaps these beginnings formed my strongest role, which I take to be audiencing more than performing, and which shares some qualities with editing: hearing others into speech, sizing up listeners, taking a turn in the conversation. My dissertation was dedicated "to my family in whose plentitude I first learned the art of audiencing." I recall the clamor and commotion of a large family in a small farmhouse with one bedroom for the boys and one for the girls. We had a series of pets, too, but in accordance with farmlore, they were better off outside.

We were tenant farmers, the modern version of sharecropping, on a tract of 320 acres. Corn and soybeans were the cash crops. We also grew oats to make straw bedding, and alfalfa to make hay for the livestock: a small herd of cattle, some pigs, and chickens. I'm invoking a rural idyll with the caveat that these breezy days were layered with complexities not developed here. It's true that we kids had the run of the farm, so long as we remained within earshot of Mom's call. Dad was never absent because all his work was at home. We'd bring him drinks in the fields--a quart jar of Pepsi with a tray of ice. By today's child-rearing standards, our lives were free and also fraught with the dangers of farm life. Like the time Shorty ran over me with the rotary hoe when I was three. I would later become intrigued with how families narrate these experiences when I studied family storytelling performance.

In rural Illinois of the 1950's there was no kindergarten, and I was impatient to go to school. I wanted to read, and I can remember the giddy triumph of sounding out mi-cro-phon. We had no books in our home, except for the Catholic Book of Knowledge with its portraits of martyrs that I breathlessly pored over. Was it St. Sabastian with all the arrows poking out of him, bloody holes in his body and anguished face? We got a few magazines: The Liguorian, the R.E.N. (Rural Electric News) with a children's page in the back, The Farm Journal. I struggled to decode the Kankakee daily newspaper. I learned to read, but in first grade I got all the major childhood diseases, from schoolmates or siblings' measles, mumps, and chicken pox, actually chicken pox twice, the second time a miserable case. I still have scars. In those days children were kept home until the spots and scabs were gone. All diseases told, I missed days and weeks of school, and somehow I got the idea I was going to flunk first grade. Whether a real risk or just family teasing, I took it to heart. I got perfect attendance awards from second grade through senior in high school.

Through resolve or constitution, I rarely miss a day of work or a deadline. In second grade, before the eagerly anticipated Parents' Night when I would proudly display my school work, I set for myself the goal of finishing my entire book of Puzzle Pages. I had already done our regular offerings, and they were displayed on the walls along with my classmates' handprints, drawings, and colorings. I worked steadily and then frantically to finish what I'd set out to do. Color, cut, and paste. Color, cut, and paste. Color, cut, and schoolroom paste with the tongue depressor. At some point late in the afternoon, before the buses lined up to take us home, I realized I couldn't make it to the end of the book. Feverish and nauseous, stomach churning and face hot red, I choked out my failure to my teacher. I remember neither what she said nor Parents' Night itself--only the panic and frustration at not being done on time. Perhaps that's why I make deadlines.

At age nine, I joined both girls' and boys' 4-H. My dad was the leader of the boys' club. If you belonged to boys' 4-H, your projects were livestock, in my case, raising a steer, which involved daily feeding, curry-combing, and halter-training the year before the county fair. We had shorthorns, a rather obscure breed of plain brown cows by comparison with black angus and two-toned Hereford. Having a shorthorn meant that I rarely faced more three or four other steers in competition when, weighing in at about fifty pounds, I led my nearly 1,000 pound steer around the show ring. I got my first experiences evaluating quality in 4-H, too, an essential editing skill. We were given judging forms for cattle, sheep, and pigs, and we traveled from farm to farm, marking our ballots and seeing how they compared to an expert's opinion. As a farm girl, I knew how calves were made and pigs were born and where meat and milk and eggs came from. We killed our own hens, my mother wringing their necks in the front yard while we kids screamed and ducked from the blood-pulsing dance of death. In the kitchen, I'd help my mother to clean corn and digested detritus from the crops and to singe the pin feathers over the stove's gas flame, holding the carcass aloft by its yellow-orange feet. But I still wasn't prepared that first year of the county fair when my beloved steer was auctioned off to a meat locker to be butchered. I found him in the temporary pens with the other innocents and cried my good-bye. Because we were just a few girls among a lot of boys, boys' 4-H contained a charge and exhilaration not present in girls' 4-H. I see now that I was always elected secretary of the boys' club--the 'girl's job'--while the older boys were the other officers. Still the position gave me my first organizational role and first oral performances as I stood, trembling but proud, to read the minutes I painstakingly wrote. I pursued the projects in girls' 4-H with equal interest, spending hours in the house with my mother. I acquired several lifelong skills in girls' 4-H. My first cooking project at the fair was a modest pair of boiled eggs (yolks firm but not green, perfectly centered in the whites); and cooking has continued to be a source of creativity and therapy for me, as well as a useful, mundane skill. Learning to sew was a much more conflicted experience. But I would later make quilts and engage in fieldwork with quilting groups in order to explore, from a feminist perspective, the contemporary quiltmaking revival in terms of cultural performance. Sewing also got me through the self-conscious high school years when I made almost all my own clothes, many more than we could afford to buy. Like many others, I dropped out of both boys' and girls' 4-H when I got into high school, distracted by other activities.

In the 1960's and before Title IX, activities for girls were extremely limited. We had a barn and a second story hay mow which we converted into a basketball court. Dad would agreeably arrange the hay to preserve our makeshift space. Lit all around with trouble lights strung from posts, we could play at night, too. The wire fencing we put up to stop the ball from plunging down into the pig lot below was only partly effective, however, so our hands smelled like manure, though less so in the winter months when they were freezing and red. If the ball bounced down into the pig lot, the youngest was usually commanded to clamber down the ladder to retrieve the ball, fending off pigs on the way. (Once one of my brothers, on a fade-

away jump shot, fell out of the hay mow into the foot of manure that broke his fall and his arm. Temporarily stunned, the pigs were on him like in scenes from *Old Yeller*. But we got to him, and my parents made another one of those trips to the emergency room.) Neighbor boys came to play basketball, but we always won because we knew the odd angles and how to arch a shot just enough to miss the beams and clear the rim. I was a good shot, but I was only casually interested in playing basketball. Two of my sisters played with passion and talent. Each held a school record for points scored in the single girls' game the high school allowed once a year, and each was a walk-on for the college team. Under girls' basketball rules of the time, they played rover, crossing the center line to play both offense and defense.

Basketball was for winter, but with a family of ten we could also field a baseball team. In the orchard with the corn crib as a backstop, we played for hours, probably every day of the summer. And although it was fun, we played hardball, literally and metaphorically. Family play toughened us girls up for the only organized sport available: summer girls' softball in nearby Martinton. The centerpiece of the summer, girls' softball was a grassroots phenomenon that attracted crowds bigger than for boys' Little League and Pony League. Dad was our biggest fan, which in a farmer's life meant stopping the disking, hoeing, cultivating, cutting hay, or picking soybeans, depending on the month, to drive us the six miles to town. We went early because he ran the popcorn stand. For these reasons, he was probably the most popular father in town. I sought and basked in his attention. The aftermath of a game was as fierce and contested as the game itself, when the whole family engaged in animated play-by-play narrative and evaluation. In what I think of as our softball heyday, six Langellier girls (sisters and cousins) made up both the battery (pitcher and catcher) and infield, leaving the outfield to non-Langelliers. Tournament games were sometimes announced over a P.A. system, so we would hear J. Langellier, B. Langellier, S. Langellier, C. Langellier, K. Langellier, and J. Langellier repeatedly over the loudspeakers. I played shortstop, not because I was best but because I was determined to have that position, Ernie Banks my idol. I practiced fielding grounders, throwing to first, and making the double play. Girls' softball was a temporary and locally organized activity, with no structure or support in schools or town offices. We played with great intensity and desire, cultivating our competitiveness and the thrill of public recognition.

I debuted in speech performance in sixth grade when I recited 'Annabel Lee' in my first speech contest, and in a later one, 'The Lady or the Tiger.' (I think there was a third performance but 'it was many and many a year ago,' and I cannot recall it.) We learned other students' readings along with our own, and so I can recite 'Little Orphan Annie,' 'The Bells,' and 'Birches,' too. In high school, I competed in the oration and original oration categories. As the only first-year student (we said freshman) in the only high school speech class, I did a demonstration speech on how to serve in volleyball and an informative speech over the intercom on the extinction of the passenger pigeon. The latter speech was based on the first book I owned, *The Silent Sky*, which my oldest brother bought me. To our delight, he came home from his first semester at the University of Illinois with a Christmas gift for each of us.

I link this first book with my first glimpse of the reality of higher education. My siblings and I were first-generation college. My father had completed high school, and my mother eighth grade (in her forties, she completed a GED and then a year of community college). My parents encouraged us to go to college, but the financial responsibility would be ours. In the 1970's, we qualified for National Student Defense loans and federal work-study. I needed no urging; and I can think of no one moment when college became not just an aspiration but a yearning. It seems like I always knew I wanted to go to college and I always wanted to be a high school teacher. In my graduation class of forty-five, five of us went on to college. Our choice of college was determined by proximity and public institutions. We were barely aware that private schools

existed. I applied and was accepted at both Illinois and Illinois State, but I chose ISU because it was less large and intimidating, and my older sister was a junior there. My younger sister would join us the following year.

I began college as an English major and speech minor, but I dropped the speech minor when I understood that Debate was a required course. I started the class but could not stay. Whether it was the verbal aggressiveness or the male majority and professors, I refused it and opted for a French minor, aware in some vague way of my cultural heritage. Certainly I was adjusting from being a big fish in our small high school--active in speech and band, yearbook editor, class president, valedictorian--to the big pond of college. I continued to be a straight-A student but an increasingly silent one, a gender pattern identified by later feminist work. I worked two or three jobs throughout college: work-study in a Headstart classroom, daily babysitting for a female university professor with three young children, and waiting tables during breaks and summer in a downtown Watseka restaurant, The Ritz, classy only in title. Later on I would recognize some of the gender and class dynamics at work in my life. I developed a series of anecdotes that express the embarrassments of class: I didn't know how to order pizza (we only ate Chef-boy-ardee at home); I bought whole chickens and made an entire meal out of the giblets, to the disgust of my first apartment roommates (they only bought pieces or threw the giblets away); I used Oxydol in my bathwater and then asked my roommates if anyone else wanted to use my hot, hardly used water (we always had at least three kids to a tub). When I made the honor roll my first year, unknown to me the university sent out invitations to my parents for the convocation. My parents were hurt that I didn't invite them to come. After one year, school was beginning to separate me from family and home, and I was learning to be embarrassed about where I came from, beginning a class migration that would take me many years to unravel and reconcile.

After graduation, I taught English and French at a small high school in western Illinois for three years. I loved the students and learned a good deal about the craft, but I chafed at the small town restrictions. I was young, single, lonely, and restless. On the advice of a friend, I took a course in the summer with Marion Kleinau at Southern Illinois University, and I mark this a turning point, directing me not only to graduate school but to Oral Interpretation. Oral Interpretation was simply the best pedagogy I'd ever encountered (an experience I'd find again with feminist pedagogy), with communication at its heart. I launched a program of study with an unusual mix of performance and communication theory, focusing my reading and research on the audience's experience just as reader response criticisms were emerging. Not much of a performer, I loved performance. From Richard Lanigan and Tom Pace I learned phenomenology and semiotics and applied them to literature and performance. I went to SIU to do a master's degree and stayed on for a Ph.D., something my parents accepted but didn't quite understand. Why was I still going to school? Enough is enough, after all, especially for a 'girl.' But having begun to understand these new and complex ideas I couldn't stop. I quoted poet Theodore Roethke in my dissertation: 'I wake to sleep. I take my waking slow. I learn by going where I have to go.'

I kept going. I discovered graduate school community and friendship as well as my life partner, Eric Peterson. Against all advice and out of step with the times, we got married in the weeks after our comprehensive exams so that we spent our first married year together writing dissertations in separate rooms of the house, my desk a door mounted on cement blocks. We defended our dissertations on the same day a year later. We'd also spent the spring applying for the five positions in the nation in oral interpretation. One day I got a phone call from an interested school, and as soon as I hung up, the phone rang again, this time for Eric. I'm not sure if the caller realized it was the same phone number, and that's one advantage, among

others, of keeping my birth name. We had agreed to 'go with the best job' after a series of interviews; and it was mine. We would be moving to the University of Maine in fall 1980, for a position that combined oral interpretation and communication theory.

On the interview I met Maryann Hartman, the only woman on the Communication faculty and the only faculty member at Maine I had heard of before the interview. Performance studies faculty at SIU had sung the praises of her projects about marginalized voices. She was not only giving these voices a hearing but letting these people speak for themselves in her performances. Such work was not only revolutionary before 1980 but also visionary, incorporating a palette of differences before the women's movement imagined itself so inclusively: women of color, people with disabilities, the elderly, women and men of Maine. A pioneer in gender research and innovative performances, Maryann was fighting cancer for her life and had fought for tenure and a place for women in the department, university, and discipline. Even in the advanced stages of her illness, I could witness the energy, creativity, and determination that propelled her life as a widow who raised four children, went back to school for a doctorate, and led the battle for equal opportunity for women at Maine. Maryann died the first week of my first September in Maine, after seeing her youngest daughter off to college. In the mid-80's, the Women in the Curriculum program instituted an annual award in her memory to honor women of achievement in Maine. Time and experience would teach me to understand the forces that Maryann worked against and to carry on the feminist legacy of her life.

Maine made me a feminist. Despite all sorts of messages to the contrary, I had managed to get to this point in my life without seriously considering gender. There was simply no feminist scholarship in my graduate courses, whether taught by women or men, although I had inklings through women professors and peers. The women's movement seemed irrelevant to me, as I was enjoying the relative freedom and privilege of graduate education and accomplishments well beyond my dreams. I was, in a word, male-identified. But intellectual and experiential forces at Maine converged to teach me what I had not learned in other ways. The university had a federal grant for one of the first programs to mainstream women's scholarship throughout the curriculum. My feminist mentors from the program, Deborah Pearlman and Mary Childers, started with a simple project of reading our basic course textbooks for their messages on gender and women. Nothing would be the same for me after that. A colleague in rhetoric, Val Endress, and I developed the first course at Maine on women and communication, which we team-taught. As a new professor, I was mentored wisely and warmly by my department chair Dwayne Van Rheen, but my feminist education was all horizontal. I learned from my peers and with my students, such as Deanna Hall with whom I authored an essay on mother-daughter storytelling for Taylor and Bates's 1988 volume on women's communication. There were numerous influences, but I would highlight here Darlene Hantzis and Kathryn Carter in performance studies. Our conversations for a co-authored essay on performance studies for Bowen and Wyatt's 1992 collection of feminist critiques in speech communication further stretched my thinking. Our title 'Performing Differences' brought feminist criticism and performance theory to bear on gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and other markers. It's tempting to write that my real education took place at Maine, but more accurate to say that feminist and multicultural scholarship reframed and refocused what I had learned in graduate school, as I re-worked phenomenology and performance studies with feminist theories and practices.

My entree into feminism began with academics, but it was bolstered by personal experience. In short, I ran into the same barriers that Maryann Hartman battled, most pointedly a senior male colleague with a history of sexist sentiment. In my first months on campus, we shared a phone line which rang in our adjoining offices. I soon realized that he was rarely in his office while I

was there every day, or if we were both in the office, he'd wait for me to answer the phone. In other words, he expected me to serve as his secretary, and many who called made the same assumption when they heard my female voice. That was frustrating enough, but not so serious as when he began a campaign of sexist remarks, harassing acts, and voting against my reappointments. On the advice of women colleagues, I began to consult with the Equal Opportunity Officer on campus, who urged me to document all interactions with him. Despite exceeding tenure expectations on each measure of teaching, research, and service, I was anxious about the tenure vote. I learned later that in the official meeting, he voted with the 4-0 majority, but when the other communication faculty and I left town for the Speech Communication Association meeting, he recruited a sympathizer and tried, unsuccessfully, to change the vote to a 2-2 split decision. And while I was tenured and promoted among many supportive male colleagues, there was no mistake that my tenure experience was profoundly gendered.

Midway through my probation period for tenure, I had an equally revolutionizing experience--becoming a mother. For me feminism and motherhood are completely intertwined rather than oppositional. Becoming a mother was the personal side of consciousness-raising that paralleled my coming to consciousness as an academic feminist. To choose between a career and motherhood seemed cruel, double-binding, and impossible (it's a choice that men have rarely needed to consider), and so Eric and I chose both. But if as child I could be 'one of the guys,' or if as a woman professor I could pass as an 'honorary gentleman,' I no longer could in pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood when I had to deal directly and every day with my woman's body. This is one of the pregnancy stories I told to a student audience at a Last Lecture series at Maine: 'When I was about six months pregnant, my husband and I went to visit friends in Nashua, New Hampshire. We arrived on a Friday night before they got home from work, and we decided to go have a Greek pizza at the restaurant around the corner where we had eaten once before when visiting. A Greek pizza--this one made of a mixture of spinach and onions with feta cheese--was perhaps less familiar in 1983 than it is today. The waiter seated me carefully, handed me a menu, and asked winningly, "Is this your first?" I said, "Oh, no, I've had Greek pizza before."' "

Our son was born on the academic plan, that is, I turned in my spring semester grades and planted my peas and onions and went to the hospital for his birth May 20, 1983. But thank goodness for my feminist readings and feminist friends who nurtured me while I learned to mother that first hard year. It was a blur. Even though we had signed up for childcare very early in my pregnancy, a slot did not open up until our son was over a year old. That first year we did nearly everything ourselves, arranging our schedules so one of us could be home and hiring help when we both had to be at school. Joan Van Rhee saved all our lives that first semester, keeping Keir two or three hours a day. The second semester, we had students: a Monday and Friday midday person, a Tuesday and Thursday mid-morning person, and a Wednesday afternoon person. After that was 'Auntie' Elaine Hayman. Even with the help, we were exhausted all the time. I wrote for the Last Lecture: 'I felt like I was failing at being a mother and at being a professor. Forget progress toward tenure; it was day-to-day survival. I wanted my mother.'

Our first inclination had been to behave as if nothing had changed, to prove that we could be professors and parents, no problem. We just kept trying to do a little more: get up a little earlier in the morning, grocery shop a little later at night, grade papers while rocking the baby. Then we realized that the whole social structure counts on this juggling and invisibility. So long as it was just our private problem, if we couldn't manage it, it was our fault. Click! The personal is the political. Quality childcare, parental leave, reproductive freedom, and other items of a feminist

agenda. So one decision we made was to not make parenting and its difficulties invisible, while we simultaneously resisted letting the world collapse around our baby, the way some new mothers do. In the same Last Lecture to students I quoted Jane Lazarre on the silent ambivalence around motherly love. A mother in *Love Knot* is talking about her infant son with another mother: "I would much prefer to die than to lose him. I guess that's love" I winced and we both laughed" but he has destroyed my life and I live only to find a way to getting it back again."

I was tenured and promoted in 1986. My scholarly reputation was growing, constellating around the general area of narrative studies, including theoretical work on personal narrative, women storytelling, and family storytelling; narrative methodology; and empirical analyses of breast cancer stories and narrative performance in quilting culture. But I was surprised by the invitation from colleagues in performance studies to self-nominate for Editor of *TPQ*. It seemed early in my career, and I felt young (I'd just turned forty) to assume a position of such responsibility and leadership. But Ray McKerrow, my colleague at Maine and a seasoned NCA leader, encouraged me and offered helpful feedback on my proposal; my dean was willing to fund a graduate student to assist with the editing; the department found some office space. And Eric was there always, at home and school, with every kind support. Our son was growing up, happy and healthy. But even with this array of institutional and personal support, the decision was a difficult one because of its demands and because I was still subject to crises of confidence over my abilities. But I was also excited about the opportunity and I reasoned that editing played to my strengths in scholarship, to my desire to bring new voices into the disciplinary dialogue, and to my penchant to make deadlines. I began to see the editorship as a way for me to take my turn in helping promote performance scholarship in the future of the field. *Text and Performance Quarterly* became an SCA journal in 1989, under the editorship of Emeritus Professor Wallace Bacon of Northwestern University. *TPQ* evolved from the earlier *Literature in Performance*, founded by the Interpretation Division of SCA in 1980. The new title reflected an expanded vision of both texts and performances. Technically, I was its first woman editor; but a more complete rendering of history emphasizes its long line of foremothers, especially Beverly Whitaker Long and Mary Frances Hopkins who edited the earlier journal and for years championed a journal for scholarship in oral interpretation. (I was not a part of those decisive discussions, and I hope they are narrated elsewhere in this project.) Although it was somewhat intimidating to follow in the footsteps of someone of the caliber of Wallace Bacon, and I knew him primarily through his publications and reputation, he was warm and generous with advice when we met at SCA to talk about the transition. Historically, *TPQ* emerged in the shift from oral interpretation to performance studies. It was a time of vision and revision, nourished and advanced through two Salado conferences in 1986 and 1989, preconvention conferences at SCA, and performance festivals, such as the Otis J. Aggertt festival at Indiana State University. At these conferences, feminist scholarship was articulated as a major site for new performance theorizing and practice. My own participation in planning Salado II with Mary Strine, who was instrumental in instituting research networks in performance studies, was formative. *TPQ* materialized the same year.

As second editor of *TPQ*, the most pressing and immediate goal was to promote and stabilize the new journal after its inaugural term with Wallace Bacon. I entered at a time of both possibility and vulnerability, and I saw my role as centering and solidifying performance studies within SCA. In my inaugural issue I wrote that '*TPQ* will continue to center on the nexus of texts, performances, and audiences within the expanded understanding of how far and how deeply textuality and performance reach into our lives.' My goal was to develop performance in ways that embraced both the narrower sense of performance as a special, aesthetic mode of communication and the broader senses of communication as performance. In both these

senses, the performance of texts is a communication process in which cultural realities, social relations, and personal identities are created and maintained or resisted and subverted. This expanded vision of performance includes literary performance, oral poetry, and performance art; performance in everyday life, such as conversation and personal narrative; social drama and rituals, for example, within organizations and families; cultural performances in public settings; and mediated performances.

I hoped to bring performance from the margins to the center of NCA and to make *TPQ* 'the' place for performance studies scholars to publish. I also hoped to invite scholars from other divisions in NCA and other disciplines to submit their work to the journal. My volumes included studies of literary texts and theatrical performances but also studies of performance rituals in the men's movement, speaking in tongues as charismatic renewal, Native American performances sponsored by a museum, documentary photography as the performance of surveillance, African-based improvisation as a performance strategy, the performance of fake identity in music clubs, self-help books and etiquette books as texts of identity, American Sign Language performance in Deaf culture, the use of texts and performances to reduce homophobia, and Asian American casting decisions in Miss Saigon.

Women were represented among authors and reviewers as well as the subjects of articles. I edited performance studies of the woman juggler, labor activist Mother Mary Jones, monologist Ruth Draper, poet Carolyn Forché, diarist Anais Nin, playwright Emily Mann, performance artist Anna Deveare Smith, and prose stylist Gertrude Stein as well as the personal narrative of an Appalachian woman and the oral history of an elderly black sharecropper. Other studies featuring women's performance included the documentation and celebration of a battered women's shelter history, the subversions of office folklore, the contours of flight attendants' speech, the spectacle of anorexia nervosa, feminine discourse in *Designing Women*, and the movie adaptation of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

I consistently insisted upon theoretically informed and methodologically rigorous studies, but I also tried to strike a proportion of innovation with high quality scholarship. I continued Wallace Bacon's practice of publishing an occasional interview. I introduced the alternative format of symposia, featuring at least one in each volume: on textual power, on politicized performances, on conversational dramatism, and on a century of performance festivals. In my last volume, I inaugurated a Performance in Review section which was continued by succeeding editors. To nurture dialogue with other communication divisions, I planned two Special Issues: one on conversational performance and the performance of conversation (guest-edited by Robert Hopper); and one on the intersection of organizational communication and performance studies (co-edited with Leonard Hawes).

The preceding paragraphs highlight the products of editing *TPQ*. They are the visible moments, analogous to the turning points that become special in writing autobiography. What gets obscured in these visible moments is the labor that creates the publications. It is an invisible web of personal negotiations, social relations, and local histories. These include the competent, careful, and good-humored labor of my three editorial assistants: Deanna Hall LaFlamme, Paul Pickering, and Maureen Perry. The patience, support, and counsel of my colleagues at Maine. And the long list of manuscript reviewers I counted on, some repeatedly, to give me and the authors constructive reviews. I wanted the editorial process to be educational, not alienating, for all participants. Recalling my first rejection letter, which was unnecessarily negative and nasty, I paraphrased or recast a review if I judged it to be unfair or mean-spirited. If editing was a form of leadership, I tried to practice it within a feminist model of empowering new authors' voices.

And what kind of life did I get as an editor? A busy one. My own research was sidelined, although I learned a lot every day reading new submissions. A relentless one, 'like being nibbled to death by ducks,' as one of my colleagues says. With quarterly deadlines, there were no down times because at least three issues are simultaneously at some stage of production. Even the familiar academic rhythms, my life measured out into semesters, were disrupted. Summer schedules were no different from winters, and I ended up proofreading blueines on Christmas vacations, the proofs following me to grandmothers' houses. What I liked most was working with young authors to get an essay in publishable shape, perhaps because it's most like teaching and perhaps because they were grateful, at least most of the time. What I liked least was trying to get colleagues to get reviews in on time, for which they are not grateful. Editing is a new way to learn about colleagues, their styles of review and adherence to deadlines--or not. I never missed a deadline, but I did have to ask for a few extra pages from the national office for the last issue. It's always been hard for me to cut and delete, as this narrative essay also demonstrates. 'To answer in a narrative' I have taught myself, and perhaps the readers, some special moments, moments constructed to be important, simultaneously rendering other moments less important and more invisible. I have called upon these moments as evidence of who we are and once were, of who I am and once was. These moments, now visible and imbued with meaning, were not innately so but became so in this conversation with other women leaders making NCA history. We must also consider what other moments can be made special, perhaps especially those that efface the everyday lives we lead. To take one example, some readers may have noticed that I was able to write my life experiences without reference to my race, as either a defining or limiting factor. This is, Ruth Frankenberg notes, part of the 'trick of whiteness.' By calling attention to race privilege as 'the non-experience of not being slapped in the face,' Frankenberg reminds us of the invisible moments where politics may be most seamlessly reproduced and where things do not change. Invisible moments call us to make more histories.

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