

EDITORIAL

Celebrating a Decade of *Critical* Mathematics Education Knowledge Dissemination: A Movement of People Revolutionaries

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Scholar and public intellectual Michelle Alexander (2018) recently cautioned about the uncritical use of the term *resistance* in her debut *The New York Times* op-ed essay, “We Are Not the Resistance.” As defiable national and international events have unfolded at an escalating pace in the past two years or so, she argues that although there is power in numbers in the resistance there are downsides as well:

But the time may have come to take the downsides [of resistance] more seriously. Resistance is a reactive state of mind. While it can be necessary for survival and to prevent catastrophic harm, it can also tempt us to set our sights too low and to restrict our field of vision ... leading us to forget our ultimate purpose and place in history.

... Viewed from the broad sweep of history, ... [they are] the resistance. We are not. Those of us who are committed to the radical evolution of American democracy are not merely resisting an unwanted reality. To the contrary, the struggle for human freedom and dignity extend back centuries and is likely to continue for generations to come....

A new nation is struggling to be born, a multiracial, multiethnic, multifaith, egalitarian democracy in which every life and every voice truly matters....

Every leap forward for American democracy—from slavery’s abolition to women’s suffrage to minimum-wage laws to the Civil Rights Acts to gay marriage—has been traceable to the revolutionary river [of people], not the resistance. In fact, the whole of American history can be described as a struggle between those who truly embrace the revolutionary idea of freedom, equality and justice for all and those who resisted. (para. 8–17)

With local, national, and international events occurring daily (some days, it seems hourly) that go against the fundamental ideals of decency and humanity which I was taught as a child, I have continued to think about Alexander’s essay that outlines the difference between those who are revolutionaries and those who are resisters. Her words certainly have come to the fore as I have been thinking about writing this, my last editorial for the *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education* (JUME) after a decade

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as editor in chief. I am proud to proclaim here that this special double issue which marks a decade of *critical*¹ mathematics education knowledge dissemination, in actuality, marks a decade of a movement of people—a movement of revolutionaries.

The revolutionary spirit of *JUME* was unquestionably present in the six articles published in the inaugural *JUME* issue on December 11, 2008. Those articles are republished in this special double issue,² with each preceded by a follow-up essay, if you will, a decade later written by at least one of the ~~authors~~ revolutionaries of the original article.³ That revolutionary spirit which was present in each inaugural article is again unquestionably present in the follow-up essays published here.

All in all, *JUME* was born, so to speak, out of a revolutionary spirit. Lou Matthews (2008), the founding editor in chief, in his inaugural editorial captured that revolutionary spirit in his description of the nearly two-year developmental stages of *JUME*. Developmental stages in which the founding Editorial Team⁴—the founding revolutionaries—worked through the start-up logistics of a peer-reviewed, online journal; speculated about its long-term sustainability; and struggled with the multiple meanings of “urban.” Ultimately, we collectively decided on a mission statement that guided our work then and continued to guide the work of subsequent Editorial Teams (i.e., subsequent revolutionaries):

To foster a transformative global academic space in mathematics that embraces critical research, emancipatory pedagogy, and scholarship of engagement in urban communities.

¹ *Critical* is used here in the critical theoretical sense. Bronner (2011), in providing a definition of sorts of critical theory, writes:

Critical theory refuses to identify freedom with any institutional arrangement or fixed system of thought. It questions the hidden assumptions and purposes of competing theories and existing forms of practice. . . . Critical theory insists that thought must respond to the new problems and the new possibilities for liberation that arise from changing historical circumstances. Interdisciplinary and uniquely experimental in character, deeply skeptical of tradition and all absolute claims, critical theory...[is] concerned not merely with how things [are] but how they might be and should be. (pp. 1–2)

² The six inaugural articles are republished in this special double issue as initially made available with only minor formatting and copyediting changes.

³ Each of the inaugural articles has a follow-up essay except for the article written by Pamela L. Paek (2008); unfortunately, she was not able to contribute a follow-up essay, but we honored her contribution to the inaugural issue by republishing her 2008 article here.

⁴ The original Editorial Team included Lou Matthews, the founding editor in chief, and associate editors Pier Junor Clarke, Ollie Manley, David Stinson (me), and Christine Thomas.

I now like to think that the transformative global academic space in mathematics created in and through *JUME*⁵ has been in resistance neither to the whitestream journals of mathematics education (Gutiérrez, 2011) nor to the institutional space of whiteness of mathematics education (Martin, 2013). But rather, as Alexander (2018) suggests, has been a revolutionary river of people who have understood that “every life and every voice truly matters” (para. 13) and “who truly embrace the revolutionary idea of freedom, equality and justice for all” (para. 17).

For the past decade, I have populated the opening editorial pages of nearly every *JUME* issue with what I hoped would be a thought-provoking discussion representative of the revolutionary spirit of *JUME*. Here, in my closing editorial, I wish to just simply and humbly thank, by name, the people—the revolutionaries—who brought *JUME* into existence: the authors, the reviewers, and the editors (see listings below).⁶ Whatever role or roles one has played throughout the past decade, it has truly been an honor to work with each of you. Both my personal and professional lives have been enriched by the opportunity. My thinking as a mathematics education scholar, researcher, and teacher educator—and, most importantly, my thinking as a human being—has benefitted greatly through the human connections I have had with each of you during my time as editor. In the end, it is always the human connections, the human relationships in which we accumulate throughout our multiplicitous and fragmented lives that actually bring meaning(s) to living.

– **Thank you for the opportunity to connect!**



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Editor in Chief

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⁵ To learn more about *JUME* and its growing impact over the past decade see [Journal History](#) under [About](#) on the *JUME* website: <http://ed-osprey.gsu.edu/ojs/index.php/JUME>. Currently, after more than a decade at Georgia State University, *JUME* is in search of a new editor in chief, editorial team, and academic home. Check the *JUME* website periodically for updates to when *JUME* will resume accepting manuscripts for publication consideration.

⁶ There is another extraordinarily important group of people to thank that, unfortunately, I cannot thank by name: *JUME* readers/users. With nearly 300,000 web views and counting of *JUME* content and nearly 1,500 [Google Scholar citations](#) and growing exponentially, to thank this group individually is impossible. But it goes without saying, *JUME* readers/users directly and indirectly have strengthened the revolution.

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