
Cover Image: Further Discussion on *A Reflection of Our Time*

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A Reflection of Our Time is a demonstration of resistance, identity, and social justice. The pursuit of sociology is to examine organizations, institutions, and systemic structures. Still, individual sociologists often have their own perspectives and reflections on the objectives. Our observations of society today have evoked our empathy, and it would be a disservice to deny ourselves and others that empathy; this empathy is what makes our community.

The creation of the cover art *A Reflection of Our Time* started out as a collaboration between those who care deeply about our journal and our greater community by gathering a collection of images from around LA County that reflect current events. However, we find ourselves in increasingly turbulent times. As events unfolded during the Spring 2025 semester, our board had to make a hard decision to omit some of the images originally considered. Our decision did not come from wanting to silence voices. Instead, our decision stemmed from apprehension. As students, activists, and journalists we have to be realistic about the impact our decisions have on others. The last thing any of us wanted was for there to inadvertently be negative consequences due to the unpredictable and constant changes in our nation.

We must use the voices we still have while we are still able to use them. The responsibility for positive change falls on these voices—on us. We owe it to those who have had their voices stripped from them. All over the world, Indigenous peoples are denied their land, their homes, their dignity. It does not stop there. After they are stripped from everything, Indigenous communities are pushed into silence, erased from the free exchange of public discourse and media. Historically speaking, the silencing of any marginalized group of people is followed by their erasure from the narrative and then, their death.

That is what brings us to *A Reflection of Our Time*. An image of a cityscape in LA County makes up the background. An androgynous figure with angel wings presents itself to the viewer,

textured in faded black and white. Solemnly, the figure looks at you and holds up a mirror. They prompt you to reflect on yourself *and* your role in society. This is a step away from the usual vibrancy on CSF's past covers. Fading represents how it feels to be in a student journal at this current moment. We see the people in our community, we hear their voices. We are losing our own voices as journalists in these turbulent times. We have to be more mindful of the way certain topics have been turned into political targets. Still, this journal serves to persist. Our hope is that the vibrancy in our community—its voice and its life—will return to the cover one day.

Ultimately, the cover is a strategic message against institutional-silencing. Our journal, the community, and the cultures and society that surround us are still strong and still worth preserving. Indigenous voices, immigrant voices, and incarcerated voices all deserve to be represented and protected. People in our community are more than headlines, images, a protest; what connects us all is the action we take for each other, and the words we use to spark this action.

But how does this pertain to us? Why should our faculty, our students, our readers participate in the action of caring? Why should you care? Right now, college students, activists, journalists, are met with hostility and punishment when they speak out about this erasure and oppression. Our community was built on diversity. It was shaped at the hands of diverse people. But now, our community is in crisis. Students who have dedicated their hearts to this campus are seeing its life leave. Our journal serves to preserve this life in any capacity that we can. We cannot do that if we stand back in silence. Sociologists are not just observers; we can spark action. Courses and books that teach us about our own roots and identities are being cut from our schools and libraries. Objective documentation itself is under attack as we publish this journal. The difference a year has made to the production of our journal is shocking. In real time we are watching a nationwide coordinated attack on fact, knowledge, and truth.

We must ask ourselves, what happened when the people before us gave into the silence? Do we still have a choice? Is our tender wording and apprehension a sign that it is already too late? We must think about our place in society and how our roles as

sociologists evolve when the intricacies of society present themselves in a time like now. Our community is textured with the voices of immigrants, the incarcerated, the oppressed. In a nation that is founded on the principle of freedom, especially freedom of speech, what sense can we make of not having it at all?



Image Description: A brick wall with two rainbow-colored wings spread upwards with the words CAL STATE LA in black with gold outline centered above the words WE ARE LA in blue with white outline.