RB4R Concrete Antiracist Gatekeeping Recommendations for Editors

- **Editorial Boards**
  - *Guiding question:* How can a journal ward against tokenistic practices?
  - *Guiding axiom:* the function of a board is to facilitate publishing new research by finding writers, encouraging them to submit their work, and creating and implementing equitable review processes.
  - *Concrete suggestions*:
    - Criteria for serving on an editorial board should be public, published, and accessible.
    - Criteria for serving on an editorial board should be re-evaluated on a regular basis, and in that process, the definition of expertise should be holistic, for there are, by definition, very few senior scholars available to serve in emergent fields.
    - Terms for serving on an editorial board should be public, published, and accessible.
    - Nominations for serving on an editorial board should be solicited and accepted on a yearly basis to replace out-going members. The process would benefit from a general call to the field for nominations, perhaps via professional associations such as RSA, SAA, MLA, etc. These nominations do not have to be followed, but the journal should get input from its readers.
    - Criteria for determining which board members are assigned as readers for submissions should be public, published, and accessible.

- **Double-blind Review**
  - *Guiding question:* How can a journal create a more ethical and informed review process?
  - *Guiding axiom:* the function of peer-review is to help a piece reach its full potential, and thus facilitate a new and original contribution to the field.
  - *Concrete suggestions*:
    - Authors’ identities should be concealed.
    - Editors should assess the vulnerability of the author in terms of status and seniority: based on that assessment, they should decide whether the reviewers’ identity can be revealed without harming them. Whenever the reviewers’ identity can be revealed to the author without potential harm, it should be revealed.
    - Reviewers’ identities should not be concealed from one another.
    - Reviewers should be informed at each stage of the decision process.
    - Reviewers should see each other’s review when they are notified of the journal’s decision in order to promote transparency and mutual accountability.
- Reviewers should also see each other’s review at the resubmission stage so that some of the labor of navigating sometimes contradictory reports might be shared between author and reviewer.
- The journal should prepare a public annual report of its practices each year for its board, reviewers, authors, and readers. The report should track who gets published on the basis of subfield, seniority, type of institution, race, and gender, with the recognition that diversity in one domain—e.g., gender—does not count for diversity in all domains.
- Have authors suggest potential reviewers. The journal might not be able to follow those suggestions, but they will help editors cast a wider net for reviewers in the future. Editors might also consider giving authors a “veto” option for reviewers.
- Editors should ask authors, in the submission guidelines, to specify the aspect of their work on which they would particularly like to receive feedback.
- Journals should consider a call for graduate student or early career researcher of color to submit a piece for publication and provide support and mentorship.

**Evaluative Criteria**
- **Guiding question**: How can a journal actively promote paradigm shifts?
- **Guiding axiom**: the function of a journal is to provide a space for the exploration of innovative and challenging ideas, and to expand knowledge through new scholarship.
- **Concrete suggestions**:
  - To articulate for its reviewers the qualities of “strong” scholarship in emerging fields, the editorial board should create the evaluative questions posed to readers, and these questions—which create the criteria—should be revisited and potentially revised every three to five years with input from readers and authors.
  - The evaluative questions should be made public, published, and accessible by the journal in the “guidelines and instructions for submission” section.
  - The economy of scarcity should not be the means of calculating a journal’s prestige.

**Special Issues and Guest Editors**
- **Guiding question**: How can journals make an ethical use of special issues for emerging fields?
- **Guiding axiom**: the function of a special issue is to capture the critical effervescence that marks a turning-point in a subfield.
- **Concrete suggestions**:
  - Whenever they are considering putting together a special issue about a given subfield, the editorial board should review the journal’s track record of publication in that subfield and commit to publish essays in that subfield in regular issues.
  - Journals should reward the labor that guest editors do on their behalf in institutionally tangible ways: for instance, by offering guest editors a 3-year term on their editorial board. This will also help the journal follow up on the previously mentioned commitment to the special issue’s subfield.