

Editor's Introduction

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I am writing this introduction in the fall of 2012 during an especially contentious presidential election season filled with hyperbole, attack, and convoluted messages. While two of the country's most powerful politicians "debate" by sidestepping questions and talking past real criticisms, I have had the pleasure of reading respectful, rhetorical, academic comments and responses from some of our country's brightest undergraduate students. The manner in which these students respond to their peers' arguments gives me hope that civic and civil discourse still exist.

The Comment and Response section for volume 10 contains responses to articles published in volume 9, and all three responses show what responsible and constructive criticism can look like. Jordan Delk responds to "Seeing Is Believing: Using the Rhetoric of Virtual Reality to Persuade," by Mark Ulrich. In the essay, Delk agrees with Ulrich's general argument but contends that virtual rhetoric has implications more far reaching than Ulrich considered. Evelyn Henson comments on Zoë Snider's "Vampires, Werewolves, and Oppression: *Twilight* and Female Gender Stereotypes." Both authors employ feminist critiques to explore the *Twilight* book and movie series; however, Henson argues that the author of the *Twilight* books, Stephenie Meyer, actively disguises a harmful conception of beauty in a manner that could potentially damage her readers' sense of self. Finally, Melissa Thornton contends that Jackie Hoermann missed an opportunity to enrich her argument by including more information about a critical source in "Speaking without Words: Silence and Epistolary Rhetoric of Catholic Women Educators on the Antebellum Frontier, 1828–1834." Thornton argues that the inclusion of more information about a key person in the essay—Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz—would have benefited Hoermann's analysis of two later female rhetors.

Taken together, these three Comment and Response essays serve as a pertinent reminder of rhetorical discourse's potential. They all take their source material seriously and show respect for the original authors' arguments, but they also add to the scholarly conversation with their own original proposals. The authors' use of rhetoric to disagree with their peers is conducted in a manner that would make Cicero proud—they are all "good" in their dealings with their peers. The way they have interacted with their peers' arguments is also a testament to the way in which they were taught, and we at *Young Scholars* once again thank the professors who worked with these wonderful undergraduate researchers.