

Editor's Introduction

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Hi.

I write my first introduction as the fourth Editor in *Young Scholars in Writing's* lengthening history, having accepted the torch from Dr. Jane Greer in 2015. After serving as an editorial board member since 2005, this is “my” first issue as Editor. As Jane knows, and as Dr. Laurie Grobman and Dr. Candace Spiegelman knew when they founded the journal in 2003, there are so many people involved in *YSW* that “my” doesn’t make a lot of sense. (Unless I break it—*then* it’s “mine.”) Our community of readers now holds the work of eleven fine writers, researchers, and thinkers, who were guided by at least as many teachers and mentors at their own institutions, then by fourteen peer reviewers from Montana State and around the country, then by nine Faculty Advising Editors, and finally by me and two Editorial Assistants. The submissions of three dozen more writers, managed by the same crew plus an additional twelve FAEs, is not included here, but having it in our minds shaped what is.

What are we taking all this time to do? Question, study, investigate. Analyze, ponder, deliberate. Reason, judge, explain, elaborate, advocate. Craft, hone, refine. Speak.

That is, these writers and the many people who helped their words get here are practicing intellectualism—critical inquiry and problem-solving by thought and speech, dissent and disputation, questioning and critique. Everyone here is an intellectual troublemaker.

I’m writing this introduction the day after a Chicago rally for presidential candidate Donald Trump was cancelled over fears of a physically violent clash between

his supporters and protestors, such as had happened hours earlier at his rally in St. Louis. In recent weeks, this leading candidate for President of the United States had repeatedly called for violence toward his protestors. Like this: “If you see somebody getting ready to throw a tomato, knock the *crap* out of ‘em, would you? Seriously. I will pay for the legal fees, I promise” (Feb. 1, 2016, Cedar Rapids, Iowa). Calling for sign-carrying, shouting protestors to be removed from his venues, Mr. Trump said, “I love the old days. You know what they used to do to guys like that when they were in a place like this? They’d be carried out on a stretcher, folks” (Feb. 22, Las Vegas, Nev.). In Fayetteville, North Carolina, he said, “In the good old days, [protesting] doesn’t happen, because they used to treat [protestors] very, very rough. And when they protested once, y’know, they would not do it again so easily” (March 10). (Yes, we’ve seen the pictures: dogs, firehoses, and nooses can have that effect.) Mr. Trump said dissenters are “so bad for our country, you have no idea. They contribute nothing, *nothing*. Get ‘em out of here! – Troublemakers – Hurting this country, folks, hurting this country” (March 11, St. Louis).

As it happens, not only does every article in this year’s volume carry on the tradition of scholarly troublemaking via critical inquiry and disputation, but our first three articles (as well as the closing First Year Spotlight article) commemorate and analyze public discourses of dissent specifically. We open with J. R. Collins’s study of Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal’s use of terrorism

metaphors in his lawsuit against President Barack Obama and the US Department of Education over Common Core State Standards. Collins analyzes language in the governor's press releases to explore the impact on invitational rhetoric (Foss and Griffin) when political discourse paints opponents as *enemies* of the people. The implications of Collins's work for understanding and conducting public-issues discourse, and his coaching toward an invitational rhetoric of genuine conversation, well fit our times. Next, Luke Christie takes us to 1969 and civil rights struggles in the South, conducting an exacting archival and textual analysis of a speech by civil rights activist Clarence Jordan, a white Southern evangelical minister. Christie examines Jordan's method of transporting biblical scenes his audience would cherish to their own historical moment in South Carolina. The analysis enriches our understanding of the civil rights movement as well as how the use of language to alter time and space can enhance our possibilities for dialogue. Our third article, by Barak Bullock, brings us to the current public debate on government surveillance. Using a significant corpus of news coverage of Edward Snowden's release of reams of classified National Security Agency documents, Bullock's analysis of rhetorical constraints demonstrates how public discourse painted Snowden's actions as those of a traitor and terrorist rather than those of a whistleblower, denying Snowden protection from laws designed to encourage the very exposure of government abuses which he performed. Bullock's conclusion, that "ideally, an informed population would be capable of appropriately weighing a dissenting voice against an institutional condemnation," offers an important perspective on intellectual troublemaking.

Dissent need not be destructive, and indeed, in the best intellectual traditions, critical inquiry and collaborative disputation work to make good ideas better. Our next three articles do so in the realms of literacy acquisition and composition instruction. Natalie Saleh performs an ethnography of literacy practices in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waco, Texas. Beginning from Deborah Brandt's notion of *literacy sponsors* and Alanna Frost's conception of *literacy stewards*, Saleh posits a third kind of literacy agency, *literacysmithing*, to explain how UUWaco members draw on existing literacies to create new ones. Literacysmithing, she argues, provides unique ways of interacting with the texts that form communities, which makes a community's receptiveness to a range of literacy sponsors an important function of their literacy. Following Saleh, Angela Glotfelter brings us into the composition classroom to contest the prevalent exclusion of style from first-year writing courses and propose a better means of attending to it. Glotfelter both theorizes a goal for our teaching of style—a blend of rhetorical devices and writerly presence—and tests a pedagogy for it as a writing fellow in a composition course. The last of our regular articles, by Meghan Phelps, extends from conventional wisdom in the teaching of academic discourse to students who bring their own discourse conventions to the academy. Phelps suggests a method of focused conferencing that helps students find their own words for what they want to say and use their own language to transition their ideas into the discourse conventions valued by the academy. Her work suggests the importance of valuing not only "students' right to their own language," but also students' right to their own knowledge-making processes.

Young Scholars in Writing is in the business of publishing voices very new to the fields of rhetoric and writing studies. We call these scholars “young” because they are so early in their academic careers, but there is nothing “young” about their intellectualism itself. This year’s Spotlight on First-Year Writing makes that plainer than ever. For the first time in my memory (as a founder of the Spotlight), each piece by our “youngest” scholars is of identical scope, depth, and scale to the work of more experienced scholars in the regular section of the journal. The state of the art in first-year writing courses seems to be achieving artfulness indeed.

Isabelle Gill leads the Spotlight section with an extensive corpus analysis of reviews of Disney “princess” films. Stepping past the now-conventional analysis that Disney’s princesses are too stereotypically feminized to present sound role models for girls, Gill presents a nuanced argument that the gendered stereotyping of princesses is actually done far more by the films’ *reviewers* than by their *makers*. The sheer scale of Gill’s analysis and her attentive reading and perceptive interpretation make her work a model of corpus-based discourse analysis. This article is followed by Caitlin Eha’s analysis of intertextuality in Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and related hobbit-lore. Eha asserts that our received theories of intertextuality fail to account for a kind of intertext that Tolkien drew on extensively, “original” or self-referential intertext created when one invented work of an author’s is intertextual with their other works. Eha’s work on intertextuality, like Saleh’s work on literacysmiths, is thus a thought-provoking extension of an existing body of theory. This year’s Spotlight closes with Jordan Allums’s analysis of one more instance of public dissent, an anti-draft

organization founded in the 1960s by David Harris. Allums examines in detail the persuasive appeals offered by Harris to persuade his listeners of the value of becoming “criminals” by refusing to submit to the draft. She offers insight on the challenge that all of the pieces in this volume consider or enact: how do we disagree, and *engage* disagreement, to build a better idea and thereby a better world?

An elementary move taught in conflict-resolution classes is the substitution of the word *and* for the word *but*. The simple change in mood from “I hear what you’re saying, *but* what I’m thinking is X” to “I hear what you’re saying *and* what I’m thinking is X” is the movement from negation to affirmation, from closure to opening. This year’s Comment & Response section contains two papers which advance the art of *and*. In her response to Natalie Midiri’s (vol. 10) analysis of Hillary Clinton’s 2011 speech on LGBT human rights, Jessica Recce demonstrates how Midiri’s conclusions can be further understood by adding analysis of a 1995 Clinton speech, showing how the inclusiveness of that speech is given up in the speech Midiri analyzed. Recce’s spirit of *and see this too* exemplifies one of the most powerful scholarly, intellectual moves available to us. So does Sara Smilowitz’s response to Olivia Weitz’s (vol. 10) study of how online comments on news articles influence journalists and their editors. Smilowitz takes up Weitz’s call to further investigate why commenters tend to address editors rather than journalists, applying a material-rhetoric analysis (Burton) to suggest why readers see journalists as lacking authority over their own work. Smilowitz’s analysis fruitfully extends this line of inquiry and raises additional questions for exploration—again, in the best tradition of scholarly inquiry.

Scholarly and intellectual work is inevitably political insofar as it studies and addresses issues of any meaning in our world. Scholars and intellectuals are thus compelled to note with dismay calls for the silencing of dissent, critique, protest, and constructive disputation. The contrast could not be more stark between those calls and the tremendously competent and valuable intellectual work carried on by the writing scholars whose research we are honored to print. Work like that of these trouble-making writers puts the “higher” in *higher education*, and demonstrates the value of that education for scholarly, intellectual approaches to public discourse and problem-solving in the face of public-beating approaches we hoped were left behind decades ago.

Therefore I’m all the more grateful to be able to edit this journal at this time. Transitioning *Young Scholars in Writing* to Montana State University last year has left its editor indebted to an even greater number of people than is usual for these volumes. Jane Greer and the Editorial Board named below offered tremendous trust in making me Editor. Jane has been, as anyone who knows her would expect, incredibly gracious and supportive during the transition, ensuring that I never felt any question was too dumb nor any request for assistance and advice too great. She was also exceedingly patient while I worked here at MSU to line up the resources necessary to continue to print the journal as a subscription-free, open publication. We now do so through support from the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Martha Potvin; the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Dr. Renee Reijo Pera; and the Dean of the College of Letters & Science, Dr. Nicol Rae. MSU’s Liberal Studies Program and Department of English collaboratively

support a course for our peer reviewing staff. The Undergraduate Scholars Program funds our editorial assistant. MSU Library hosts the electronic version of the journal with the able support of librarians Leila Sturman and Jason Clark and the advisement of Dean of the Library Kenning Arlitsch. Ron Lambert and ace designer Alison Gauthier in University Communications see our manuscripts to press and have been a dream to work with, simultaneously intuiting our design desires and accommodating my ceaseless lateness. Specially, I want to thank Dr. Phil Gaines, past chair of the Department of English, for his unfailing support of this project; Dr. Tami Eitle, Liberal Studies program director, for her willingness to commit to this project and her savvy in ensuring funding was flowing as necessary; Dr. Linda Karell, for her years-ago department-chair encouragement of this project and simultaneous advice to wait on it until the time was right; and two outstanding Department of English business operations managers, Carolyn Steele and Mandy Hansen, for their wizardry and endless patience as *YSW* complicates their accounting lives.

The first step in producing the journal is peer review. This year past *YSW* contributors Audrey Ackerman, Margaret Collins, Daniel Pfeiffer, and Nathan Voeller were joined by the first class of MSU students to take WRIT 374 Magazine Editing and Production: Megan Goertz, Peter Hoag, Eric Joondelph, Kelly Kinney, Lizzy Niewojna, Matt Parsons, Sadie Robertus, Adam Schreuder, Levi Wortz, and Aimee Wortman. Submissions for the Spotlight on First-Year Writing were reviewed by Michael Johnson and Jimmy Lovrien at College of St. Scholastica and Mikala Cooper, Samantha Hansen, Carly Hanson, Bethany Kluender, Nicholas Misukanis, and Nicholas Yaneff at Morningside

College. My gratitude to all of you for your wise and helpful peer reviews.

To the members of YSW's Editorial Board, my thanks for your able leadership as well as your service as Faculty Advising Editors this year: Jeff Andelora, Paige Banaji, Heather Bastian, Melanie Burdick, Abby Dubisar, David Elder, Laura Ellis-Lai, TJ Geiger, Joanne Giordano, John Gravener, Jane Greer, Laurie Grobman, Patti Hanlon-Baker, Jonathan Hunt, Joseph Janangelo, Jeff Klausman, Clyde Moneyhun, Sean O'Rourke, Steve Price, Holly Ryan, Annette Vee, and Stephanie Vie. Further thanks and praise to our section editors, David Elder and Heather Bastian for the Spotlight on First-Year Writing, and Jonathan Hunt for Comment & Response.

Finally, for this volume I offer uber-thanks, and one helluva pizza party, to our first two undergraduate Editorial Assistants,

Sadie Robertus (2015) and Anjeli Doty (2016). Sadie, and then Anjeli, made it possible for me to edit the journal while also directing the Core Writing Program at MSU and staying current on other research commitments and teaching. They manage spreadsheets, correspond with writers and editorial board members, contribute to website and journal design, copyedit, handle meeting minutes—that is, do everything a journal needs to do to be a journal.

These students, like our writers, have it *amazingly* together. Every generation has had its geniuses. Working with undergraduate researchers at my own institution and from so many others convinces me that the newest generation has more of them. It is truly a pleasure to see these troublemakers in action throughout the pages of *Young Scholars in Writing*.

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