

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

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Sarah Bach begins her article title with a striking quote from Greta Thunberg: “Our house is on fire.” While Thunberg specifically references our planet threatened by climate change, this statement is an apt metaphor for our experiences in the world at large over the last two years; crises have marked 2020 and 2021. As we write this introduction, the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to more than five million deaths worldwide (World Health Organization) and disruption in almost every area of life, including higher education. The crises of racial inequity and police violence and the resulting protests have made names including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and places like Kenosha, WI, household names. The stress from this time of uncertainty, disruption, and unrest has led to what’s been called a “mental health crisis” (American Psychological Association). Against this backdrop of crises, we present the tremendous work of undergraduate researchers for *Young Scholars in Writing* volume 19. The young scholars published here completed their work, both the original research and writing and the revision process done with *YSW*’s Faculty Advisory Editors, during these tumultuous times, and the contents of this volume reflect these undergraduates’ desire to tackle these crises through their scholarship. When we look at the research problems and themes

taken up in articles, this volume demonstrates that young scholars in rhetoric and writing studies are actively examining how writing and rhetoric both reflect our world *and* can be used to enact positive change.

The cover of this volume features the photograph “Climate Protest in Zurich (2019)” by Tom Steger. We selected this photograph because it captures the importance of young people’s leadership and rhetorical practices in response to many of the overlapping crises we’re facing and that scholars examine in this issue: the climate crisis, Covid, and the ongoing global fight for civil rights. This photograph, taken during one of the many climate protests of recent years, captures the youth-driven nature of so many of these events; in March 2019, when this photograph was likely taken, there was a worldwide youth climate strike around the globe, when students left school and made their frustrations heard, inspired by the then fifteen-year-old Greta Thunberg’s months-long climate protest outside the Swedish parliament. Like this issue of *Young Scholars in Writing*, Steger’s photograph embodies the rhetorical power of students and young people around the world in the face of emergency.

This volume opens with a first-year spotlight article. In his powerful contrastive analysis of three recompositions of the popular

and controversial music video “This is America” by Childish Gambino, Micah Williams explores what makes a recomposition *just*. When reading this piece, one of our editorial interns, Kameron Cherry, commented, “I love how Williams explains how we can flip a popular phrase or title to match our overall rhetorical purpose when it comes to social justice.” This piece continues a long tradition of first-year spotlight articles that contribute rich sources and theoretical frameworks to important scholarly conversations in the field of rhetoric and writing studies. Williams carefully analyzes primary sources from very different cultural contexts across the globe and advances a framework for evaluating just and unjust recomposition, contributing to our understanding of transnational digital composition and rhetorical ethics.

Olivia Rowland also focuses on justice and positive change in her analysis of the rhetorical strategies of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement for Palestinian rights, specifically as it works to resist and challenge neoliberal ideology. In a year full of activism and calls for changes amidst a global pandemic, Rowland looks at how a particular movement navigates the rhetorical situation and continues its mission of promoting intersectional justice. Similarly, Sarah Bach explores the rhetorical strategies of youth climate activists, specifically the Fridays For Future organization founded by Greta Thunberg. Responding to Bach’s article, another editorial intern, Jalil Dixon, said, “In a journal titled *Young Scholars in Writing*, it really strikes hard how Bach uses scholarly sources and public videos to discuss how youth activists can position themselves to speak on the behalf of others despite their drawbacks

being youth in an adult world.” Likewise, in her article, Ally Roeker investigates the term “essential worker,” language used during the pandemic to label (often low-wage) workers who were required to interact with the public. Starting from her own experience as an “essential worker,” Roeker analyzes public artifacts to outline multiple meanings of *essential worker* and consider the implications of those meanings.

Even articles that don’t directly examine discourses about the crises we’re facing reveal how these crises constrain and shape the work of undergraduate scholars. Emily Lawrence presents findings from an empirical study of students’ transfer of writing knowledge and skills from composition through analysis of reflective assignments, a study whose design was altered by higher education’s sudden pivot to remote instruction in response to COVID-19. Despite the challenging research context, Lawrence’s systematic investigation into transfer and reflection exemplifies the kind of work we seek to advance in the journal. Our goal as editors has been to showcase a variety of research methods and methodologies, including empirical research.

This volume includes two methodological reflections, the journal’s newest genre that focuses on research methods and methodologies. In volume 18, we published two methodological reflections: Angela Myers’ “Creating Impact through User-Centered Research” and Nidhi Gandhi’s “My First Time Conducting a Study as a Novice Researcher.” Myers’ and Gandhi’s pieces represented two distinct approaches to this genre. In this volume, Zoë DeKruif and Jamie Smith’s reflection follows in Myers’ footsteps, detailing their mixed-method approach to linguistic

corpus analysis. They describe the inductive coding methods they used to better understand writing center session notes and offer valuable insight into using corpus analysis software to complete this type of research. On the other hand, Abigail Kremer follows Gandhi's approach to the genre, offering a personal look at the undergraduate experience of contending with the messiness of empirical research. Kremer details her process of developing a qualitative coding system to analyze the feedback given by writing tutors in online whiteboard environments, a tutoring modality that met the needs of writing centers pivoting to providing online tutoring during the pandemic. Finally, Haley Wellner's methodological reflection draws on both of these approaches to the genre, offering an overview of genre cross-writing as an autoethnographic method for considering genres and identities and providing a thoughtful, first-hand account of her experience engaging with this method. We are excited to see the growth and potential of the methodological reflection genre. The volume closes with Ashley Beresch's response to Gina Keplinger's v. 14 article, "Don't Dismiss the List: The Value of Writing Extraordinary Issues into Ordinary Forms." Using rhetorical genre theory, Beresch offers a different perspective about the strengths and weaknesses of the list genre and its tradition in academic writing.

We are excited that this volume continues to facilitate and strengthen a growing under

graduate researcher network (DelliCarpini et al.; Downs) that supports student-to-student mentoring. Through their publications in *Young Scholars in Writing*, each of the undergraduate researchers in this volume offers knowledge from research findings, models of genres and methods, and insights that can support new undergraduate researchers in the field. Importantly, we're also working to grow this network through our choices about producing and publicizing this journal. In the past year, our team included three editorial interns, all undergraduates who worked with us through the process of reviewing submissions, peer review, copy-editing, and pre-publication as well as promoting the journal in our digital spaces. Beck Liberatore, Jalil Dixon, and Kameron Cherry have done outstanding work helping us get the word out about the authors, mentors, and students working behind the scenes on various facets of the journal. We've also been intentional about expanding the involvement of undergraduates beyond our institutional home of York College of Pennsylvania (YCP). For this volume, previous *YSW* authors joined undergraduates from three institutions, Elon University, Hofstra University, and Wittenberg University, along with YCP students, to peer review submissions. We are excited to continue growing this network, providing opportunities for students from a range of institutions to participate in *Young Scholars in Writing*.

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