

## YSW RETROSPECTIVES: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PUBLISH IN *YOUNG SCHOLARS IN WRITING*?

In celebration of the 20th volume of *Young Scholars in Writing (YSW)*, the editors put out a call to past authors in the journal, asking for short reflections about what publishing their articles in the journal meant to them.

**Author:** David Elder

**Title of *YSW* article:** “Chris Rock: Epideictic Rhetor”

**When published:** Vol. 3, 2005

**Current position:** Associate Professor of Writing & Rhetoric and Writing Center Director at Morningside University

In my junior year of college, I had the opportunity to publish “Chris Rock: Epideictic Rhetor” in Volume 3 of *YSW*. I worked with the inimitable Laurie Grobman, who taught me how to receive feedback and revise a paper that became part of the scholarship of the field—skills that would help me as I went to Texas Christian University to pursue my Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition. From there, I became a peer reviewer for the journal, then a Faculty Advising Editor (FAE), Editor of the Spotlight on First-Year Writing section, and Editor of the Comment and Response section. I worked with *YSW* in one way or another from 2004-2019, from undergraduate to graduate student to Assistant Professor to Associate Professor.

Working with the Editorial Board of *YSW* helped me form relationships in the field and gave me experience in editing, and now I teach a class at my university called Editing and

Publishing. But more than anything, *YSW* helped me learn how to give feedback to students. Whether it was my experience publishing my own work in the journal or working with the Editorial team to assist students with revisions, *YSW* taught me how to comment on student writing in a way that helped students want to revise their papers. And the amazing scholarship found within the journal has given me tools to teach the next generation of writing teachers and writing tutors. I regularly assign Robin Martin’s article, “Rhetoric of Teacher Comments on Student Writing,” in my upper-level classes for students who plan to go into education.

*YSW* was the springboard for my career as an academic, and my experiences working with the journal, from writer to editor, have been invaluable to me personally and professionally.

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**Author:** Travis Maynard

**Title of *YSW* article:** “And on the Eighth Day, God Created Rhetoricians: A Case Study of the Creation Museum”

**When published:** Vol. 8, 2011

**Current position:** Assistant Professor, English & Professional Writing and Rhetoric, Elon University

This past spring, I was having lunch with Liz Crouse, a graduating senior whom I had mentored through several courses, an internship, and a semester-long teaching apprenticeship. Our conversation drifted from topic to topic: upcoming elections; her first “real world” job search; future grad school applications; vague recollections of theorists and concepts from the classes we had together; the existential dread of starting a new chapter in life; and my own undergraduate thesis that appeared in *YSW*. In response to the latter, Liz casually mentioned that her work would be appearing in an upcoming issue of *YSW*.

That moment was not just a point of pride for me, knowing that a student I had worked closely with was going to experience the joy of seeing one’s name in print for the first time. It was also a marker of a new chapter in my own professional life, a concrete indicator that I have a hand in contributing to the next generation of *Young Scholars in Writing*.

While I did not mentor the research project that appears in this issue, the fact that Liz’s undergraduate research is published in the same journal as my own signifies a moment where my professional life has come full circle. A moment that likely would not have been possible without my contribution to *YSW*, putting me further along the path to becoming a faculty member in Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

How appropriate that this reflection appears in the very same issue which my student, mentee, and colleague has been published. I doubt that I am the first *YSW* contributor to have this experience, and I certainly won’t be the last, but I am so grateful to have had the

opportunities to publish in the journal and work alongside such brilliant students.

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**Author:** Rori Meyer

**Title of *YSW* article:** “Developing Stronger Peer-to-Peer Feedback in the Undergraduate Creative Writing Workshop”

**When published:** Vol. 9, 2012

**Current position:** Visiting Professor, Grand Valley State University

Publishing in *Young Scholars in Writing* was a wonderful opportunity to dip my toes into the waters of research as an undergraduate. Though there are some small opportunities to publish on campus (which, in and of itself, is great, too!), it was very unique to go through the research and publication process as a young writer. By going through this research process, I gained multiple skills: I better understood what real researchers go through. That it might be easy to assume your hypothesis will be true, but when you actually go out into the field and interview people, you may find completely different results than you were anticipating. I still remember that one of the most surprising things my co-author and I learned in the process was finding out from our professors that the feedback sheets we were giving to our peers weren’t really for those peers—they were for us, as writers, to perhaps learn about our own shortcomings.

Being able to publish in this manner also gave me confidence to continue pursuing my education. I was a B kind of a student (a good critical thinker, but not the most academically

inclined individual), and publishing made me feel like I was a part of the larger writerly collective; that I could really participate in an active way, especially if I cared about the subject at hand.

To those who are considering publishing, I would encourage them to try and do so. It can feel a bit intimidating and cumbersome, but it's a great experience and it's kind of a boon to your resume as a young writer.

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**Author:** Sarah Singer

**Title of *YSW* article:** "Beyond the Domestic Sphere: Home Economics and the Education of Women at Maryland State College, 1916-94"

**When published:** Vol. 10, 2013

**Current position:** Assistant Professor of English, University of Central Florida

Publishing with *YSW* was one of the most important experiences of my undergraduate education. I thought that I wanted to go to graduate school, but the opportunity to revise and resubmit my essay for *YSW* helped me understand the kind of writing that I would be doing when I got there. My *YSW* writing process was different from any I have previously undertaken. My faculty mentor, Dr. Paige Banaji, read draft after draft with great care and offered encouraging feedback along the way. She pushed me to craft both my ideas and my prose. Dr. Banaji treated me like a fellow expert, which surprised and delighted me. I had never edited a manuscript so much, but instead of being frustrating, it was fun. Although I had taken

rhetoric courses with Dr. Shirley Logan, Dr. Jane Donaworth, and Dr. Jessica Enoch, I had never had a chance to engage with one project so deeply. With Dr. Banaji's support, I felt invited to enter the scholarly community beyond the undergraduate classroom. For the first time (besides my middle school literary magazine), I was a published author! I proudly displayed the print journal issue on my dorm room desk. I treasured the email that Dr. Jane Greer, the then-editor, sent me afterwards, in which she congratulated me on my work. She made me feel like my research was important—like I really had an impact on the field of feminist rhetorical historiography. Ultimately, I used my *YSW* article as my writing sample for graduate school. Serving as an FAE has been among the greatest honors of my academic career, which arguably began ten years ago when I published in *YSW*. If you are thinking about submitting to *YSW*, do it! You never know where your writing might take you.

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**Author:** Ashley Cerku

**Title of *YSW* article:** "The Art and Rhetoric of Letter Writing: Preserving Rhetorical Strategies Throughout Time"

**When published:** Vol. 12, 2015

**Current position:** Manager of the Oakland University Writing Center and Ph.D. student in Sociocultural Anthropology at Michigan State University

My article, "The Art and Rhetoric of Letter Writing: Preserving Rhetorical Strategies Throughout Time" was published in Volume

12 of *Young Scholars in Writing* in 2015. It was my first academic publication, and it was a rewarding experience seeing my name in print. It may seem simple, but having my name written in black ink on the published page symbolized the culmination of all of my hard work. From the long hours of research to writing countless drafts, the moment I received the printed journal elicited the feeling of accomplishment and represented an accumulation of emotions. This publication inspired me to conduct other research projects and submit to other journals, leading to more publications. The editorial board was welcoming and supportive throughout the entire publishing process, which is important for first-time submitters. If you are thinking about submitting your research to *Young Scholars in Writing* but may have reservations about it, I have one piece of advice for you: take the leap and just do it. You will not regret it. I look forward to seeing your name in print soon.

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**Author:** Kira Pratt

**Title of YSW article:** “Why We Need to Get in ‘Formation’: The Rhetoric of Beyoncé”

**When Published:** Vol 14, 2017

**Current position:** Doctoral student in the Department of Sociology at New York University

Having my work published with *YSW* is one of the most important opportunities I have had. Professionally, the experience provided the greatest motivation for me to seriously consider pursuing research and writing as a career. But equally—if not more—important, the opportunity personally helped me to grow into and recognize my writerly capabilities. It affirmed

and instilled a sense of agency and possibility in me during a pivotal time of my life.

My piece began as a research paper for an introductory writing class in my first year of college. But guidance from my professor-turned-mentor to rearticulate the paper for submission to *YSW* allowed me to see the power in taking ownership of my work and learning beyond the requirements of the classroom. I remember this feeling of pure elation when I received both the notifications of my submission’s acceptance and the final confirmation that the journal was on its way to print. Seeing my work transcend the boundaries of my school to be included in this national collection was amazing. It remains one of my proudest accomplishments.

Of course, it was significant that I was able to add that publication to my resume when I was applying to doctoral programs after college. But more meaningful to me was learning of its use by readers. I know of at least two classrooms—one at a school in Arizona and one at my current institution in New York—that have used my essay in their course syllabi. And that is the coolest feeling. All I have ever hoped for with my writing is for at least someone to read it and find something in it that resonates. So, for that to have happened, and for that to be a possibility among others, it feels immensely rewarding.

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**Author:** Samantha Rae Garvey

**Title of YSW article:** “Tales in Language, Confidence, and Learning Environments: Exploring Students’ Mental Health Through Literacy Narratives”

**When published:** Vol. 18, 2021

**Current position:** M.A. graduate student preparing to pursue Ph.D. studies

When my professor suggested that I seek publishing opportunities for this paper I felt extremely humbled. The sense of accomplishment, that my work was important and relevant to the field in which I hoped to build a career, was overwhelming, and I was at once excited and scared to death. I had never expected that piece to be read outside of my undergraduate class, so it seemed terribly inadequate to me as I compared it to other published articles. As I got to know my FAE, who has become a wonderful acquaintance and colleague as I continue my graduate school journey, I quickly realized that the potential of my work was the most important thing. That is, though I saw my paper as lacking a specific focus, my FAE and I could work together to bring it to its full potential. Immediately, my fears were calmed, and we got to work. Dr. Singer's abstract activity, which challenged me to answer five questions as specifically and concisely as possible, became my greatest tool. We returned to this activity throughout each stage of our editing process. Each time, I saw my paper unfolding into a piece worthy of publication. I have held on to this activity, and it has served me well throughout every subsequent paper and in writing my master's thesis.

Publishing in *YSW* as an undergrad was such an honor and has led to many other opportunities. Having this publication on my CV has helped me establish myself as a serious scholar. Moreover, I have been able to use the skills I gained from this experience to help other colleagues in publishing their work.

Truly, publishing in *YSW* was a kickstart to my career, and I will always be grateful for that opportunity.

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**Author:** Anna Maltbie

**Title of *YSW* article:** "Stories for Reproductive Freedom: A Rhetorical Analysis of Storytelling on NARAL Pro-Choice America's Website"

**When published:** Vol. 18, 2021

**Current position:** Journals Publishing Assistant at Wiley

In the past two and a half years since I submitted my article to *Young Scholars in Writing* for consideration, I have found the process I went through to revise and prepare my manuscript invaluable professionally. I work in academic publishing now, and my experience with *YSW* has guided me in helping to ease researchers through the publication process. I recognize the importance of clearly communicating timelines and next steps to authors because I have been in their place. Collaborating one-on-one with my FAE mentor has given me an appreciation for the benefits of individualized feedback and support.

I have also found a measure of personal comfort in my work. Since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, it is increasingly important to speak up. I now see my article "'Stories for Reproductive Freedom: A Rhetorical Analysis of Storytelling on NARAL Pro-Choice America's Website'" as an examination of the pro-choice voices in public record prior to the 2022 decision, as well as an articulation of my own

beliefs to refer to when I struggle to put my thoughts into words.

For any students interested in publishing with *YSW*, my advice is: go for it! You are already writing for your classes, so you may as well submit the work of which you are most proud. At worst, you will receive a rejection letter and not need to do any more work. At best, your manuscript will be accepted, and you'll go through the revision process, see your work published in a journal, and fall further in love with publishing to the point of making it your career. That's what happened to me, at least. You'll most likely fall somewhere in between, and that is equally worthwhile.

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**Author:** Ally Roeker

**Title of *YSW* article:** "To Be An Essential Worker: An Exploration of Rhetoric During COVID-19"

**When published:** Vol. 19, 2022

**Current position:** Advancement Communications Coordinator at Coe College

Publication has always been a dream of mine, and having my work selected for *Young Scholars in Writing* was an incredibly meaningful experience for many reasons. My published piece stemmed from an independent study, and knowing that other people were interested in a topic important to me was reassuring and motivating. The publication process with *Young Scholars in Writing* showed me what it was like to be invested in significant revisions for a project rather than only finalizing

it enough for a grade. I was able to learn how to accept and implement feedback from several different reviewers, including my professor, my FAE mentor, and the *YSW* editors. This opportunity helped me to practice the process and perseverance that would be necessary to complete my senior thesis the following year. In the midst of revisions for my thesis, I still remember the day I received the email that the issue with my article had been published. Getting my piece ready for the journal was a community effort, and it was also a community celebration. All of my professors from the Rhetoric department congratulated me, and my family was incredibly proud of me achieving this long-anticipated life goal. For any students interested in publishing with *YSW*, my best advice would be to take the leap. It may be intimidating to send your writing into the world to be read by others, but you will leave the process with encouragement, new skills, and a byline in a thought-provoking, inspiring publication.

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**Author:** Micah Williams

**Title of *YSW* article:** "Is This America?: How Rhetorical Velocity and Recomposition Turn Movements into Memes"

**When published:** Vol. 19, 2022

**Current position:** English Ph.D. student at the University of Rochester

As someone who tends to battle imposter syndrome a lot, having my work published in an academic journal helped boost my confidence as a scholar. When I first received notice that

my paper had proceeded to the editing process, I was surprised that *YSW* would accept an article about something so embedded in pop culture as a music video by Childish Gambino. However, my FAE mentor, Savanna Conner, reassured me of the importance of my work and its ability to ground abstract, academic concepts—such as recomposition, rhetorical velocity, and appropriation—within pop culture, which is so influential now more than ever in this digital age. We went through a few revisions over a summer to further polish my syntax and bolster my ideas with the new knowledge I gained since my first-year paper

was written. But revising was actually an enjoyable process for this paper! With Savanna, I had full reign over the content of my paper, and she allowed me autonomy over which suggestions I accepted (I accepted many of them because they were tremendously insightful). Overall, it was a great experience to learn about revision and publication in an environment cultivated for undergraduate students. Now that I'm a student in a Ph.D. program, I feel more confident in this space, knowing I demonstrated my publication potential so early in my academic career.