

EDITOR'S NOTE

Acting and directing theorist Anne Bogart boldly argues that “One of the most radical things you can do in this culture of the inexact is to finish a sentence [. . .] Words are dangerous and they can be powerful.” This kind of meaningful and deep engagement with language—from big ideas to single words—facilitates the larger academic conversation our students undertake as they become directors of their own ideas. The act of writing is inherently both critical and creative: the intellectual rigor in writing an argument claim mirrors that in composing a poem. To highlight the connection between the critical and creative, for the first time, *WR* includes two pieces of creative writing, a fairy tale and a poem. Our students are writing varied and vibrant texts, and Issue 7 showcases the Writing Program’s continued efforts to broaden the scope of academic conversation.

Chosen from 440 submissions, the 14 winning selections—11 essays and 3 alternative genre pieces—are exemplary in their originality, complexity, and creativity. Students take on bold ideas like Lauren Kesler’s prize-winning essay, “Painting the Real Picture: The Benefits of Autoethnographic Filmmaking for Children with Life-Threatening Illness,” which argues that children with life-threatening illnesses become agents of their own hospital experience through autoethnographic filming to help tamper Hollywood’s romanticized images of childhood illness. In another prize-winning essay, “Food: The hard work of separating families while keeping it all together,” Maria Del Rosario Castro Diaz examines Americanization through the lens of food. This essay ultimately highlights the complex and dualistic nature of enculturation, or the process an individual from another culture must undergo when confronted with a new cultural milieu.

The scope of subject matter and attention to detail in the rest of Issue 7's essays are equally impressive. The authors analyze cultural "texts" and people through new lenses: from interpreting *Battlestar Galactica* as an American road narrative (Jones) to questioning why Lincoln has remained such a beloved historical figure (Kraehling); and from examining the role alcohol plays in Raymond Carver's fiction (Simpson), to interpreting the significance of alliterative verse in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Espinoza), to even questioning the Copyright Act's relevancy to Jazz (Park). Other essays take on cultural quandaries, such as the effect of Westernization in Brazil (Soares Bezerra) and the crisis of identity for immigrants in America as depicted in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Warrior Woman* (Poon); while other essays expose racial oppression in the historically beloved children's series *Curious George* (Terhune) and illuminate the significant role cameras play in exposing violence and searching for peace in the documentary *5 Broken Cameras* (Dean).

The alternative genre selections also ask the reader to see the world anew. Jimmy Sbordone's prize-winning poem "Is Violence—" meditates on both the destructive and generative force of a supernova. This short poem is itself a supernova for its brevity and brightness. In "Bad Parenting: The True Villain of "Rumpelstiltskin," Hannah Levin rewrites the classic fairy tale to highlight the power dynamic between parents and children. And in "This Is the Way We Are," a public intellectual essay, Sarah White shows us how street photography creates and reflects American culture.

These essays and alternative genre pieces achieve the challenging balance between big ideas and attention to language (and image). The authors accomplish Anne Bogart's belief: they make words dangerous and powerful in what they spotlight and expose. They ask us to look carefully at our world and by doing so examine its very foundation.

— Carrie Bennett, Editor