

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION
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This volume of *Dialogues@RU* is, in many respects, even more exciting than the first volume. While the essays included in Volume One are comparable to those published here, a number of innovations around the revision process bring this volume closer to realizing the underlying spirit of the journal's title. This year advanced undergraduate reviewers took responsibility for writing letters recommending revisions to those essays we decided to publish in *Dialogues@RU*. These letters formed the basis for the authors' revisions to the included essays. Some of these reviewers went on to write critical commentaries on the revised versions of the essays. We then invited the authors to respond to those critical commentaries. In the interest of representing the dialogue between author and reviewer, we decided to print these commentaries and responses. The result is a model for the kind of undergraduate intellectual exchange that can occur in the environment of a research university. It is my hope that future volumes of *Dialogues@RU* will expand this approach and include the dialogue around all of the published essays.

Our ability to configure the journal in this fashion stemmed from our decision to offer student reviewers the opportunity to participate in the review process as part of an internship on peer review and journal editing. We repeated the blind review process we established with Volume One. We did not know the identities of any of the authors as we reviewed the papers and made decisions about which essays we would publish. In small groups we discussed the revisions we would like to see in those essays. And each student reviewer took responsibility for shepherding an included essay through the revision process. Unfortunately, the timing of the review and revision process precluded some reviewers from drafting critical commentaries after the essays had been revised. I am not particularly troubled by our inability to represent the dialogue around each included essay. As a writing instructor, I am very comfortable seeing the

development of this project as akin to the process of drafting a worthwhile paper.

Each of the papers published in this journal represents outstanding undergraduate research writing. While these papers have been revised by the authors on the basis of recommendations for revision produced by our team of advanced undergraduate reviewers, we have done only minimal work to copyedit them. We believe it is important to represent what students actually write. The occasional marks of imperfection that may remain in these papers do not signal weakness on the part of Rutgers students. Rather, they are a reminder that writing skills are acquired over years of practice. Our students will only improve as writers if given more opportunities to hone their abilities. What we present here is evidence that Rutgers undergraduates receive an outstanding base on which to build as they develop as writers. The students whose work is represented here are synthesizing ideas and evidence from a variety of sources, and are shaping that synthesis in ways that are both productive for their particular arguments and responsible to the original sources. I am particularly pleased that we are publishing so many papers that force the reader to think about the broader implications of a particular issue. An essay on Rebecca Walker's autobiography is less about Walker than it is about the power and limits of language. A study of the withering of a community-based organization goes on to explore ways for groups to be productive agents within the community. A paper on *Fight Club* (1999) says less about the film than it says about our deep connection to violence. And the other contributions also ask the reader to think beyond the confines of the individual paper topics.

As with Volume One, the papers included here demonstrate just how much latitude students in the Writing Program's research-based courses have to define their own projects around their particular interests. Jennifer Butt (Rutgers College), in a paper about revisionist efforts to erase Japanese consciousness the Japanese army's massacre of Chinese civilians and prisoners of war at Nanking, exposes a war crimes issue that also raises important questions about

the relationship between a nation and its history. Lisa Cardinal (Livingston College) explores the relationship between language and the self through a reading of Rebecca Walker's autobiography. Denise Svenson, the undergraduate reviewer charged with guiding Cardinal in revisions, does a wonderful job commenting on the essay. Cardinal's response both extends the conversation beyond the paper itself and offers the reader some insight into her decision to write about the relationship between language and identity. In the process, the reader gets a glimpse of the revision process in *College Writing and Research* (355:301). Anthony Lopez's (Cook College) essay examines the complex relationship between fashion, rebellion, and marketing by looking closely at an important component of Hip-Hop culture, customized shoes. Lopez, in his response to Amit Baria's insightful commentary, defines himself as a "Hip Hop lifer." Albert Min (University College) is a philosophy major. In his essay, he draws on Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and postmodern theory to articulate a kind of middle ground between an objective notion of truth and what he sees as the subjectivity in Kierkegaard's account of experience. In "I Want You to Hit Me as Hard as You Can," James Nelson (Livingston College) aims to challenge those who would criticize popular media depictions of violence by arguing that violence is an inextricable part of the human condition. Duyen Pham's (Ernest Mario College of Pharmacy) contribution develops the argument that Madonna's appropriation of elements of patriarchy amounts to a subversion of those elements in a way that makes her a "rebel with a cause." Neha Bagchi, Pham's reviewer, pushes Pham to develop her juxtaposition of Madonna with both Michael Jackson and Britney Spears. Pham's response to Bagchi is certainly worth reading. Kara Scharwath (Cook College) studies environmental policy and institutions, with an international focus. Her essay uses an environmental rights perspective to critically examine the market-based proposals at the heart of the Kyoto Protocol, an important multi-national effort address issues of global warming. Nicole Wines (Rutgers College) studies the Hoboken (New Jersey) chapter of *Food Not Bombs* in an examination

of the complex relationship between community-based organizations and the community in which they operate. Wines has been active in both the Hoboken and New Brunswick chapters of Food Not Bombs, and is particularly interested in community activism.

As I reflect on the publication of our second volume of *Dialogues@RU*, and think of this project as a drafting process, I cannot help but look forward to the possibilities for Volume Three. We had hoped that our university-wide call for submissions following the publication of Volume One (2002) would generate submissions from students who wrote research papers in courses across the curriculum. Regrettably, we received no papers written in courses outside the Writing Program. And yet *Dialogues@RU* cannot fully represent the range of outstanding undergraduate research that occurs at Rutgers University without those submissions. I invite those individuals responsible for undergraduate education in their academic departments to identify those courses in which students typically write extended research papers, to speak with the instructors of those courses about *Dialogues@RU*, and to ask those instructors to recommend that their best students submit their papers for possible inclusion in Volume Three. The Call for Submissions appears on the final page of this volume, and is also available at the website for *Dialogues@RU*, <http://dialogues.rutgers.edu>.