



a journal of first-year writing

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One's Voice**
JULIE WAN

**You're Filtering Me Out: Reviewing
Snapchat Lenses through a
Rhetorical Lens**
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**The Future of Voting in a
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Volume 9 | Issue 1 | Spring 2018

The Journal of the First-Year Writing Program at the University of Central Florida

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From the Editor

What is writing, and what can we do with it? This is a question that is at the heart of our first-year composition courses, and you might have come to consider it on your own. I always start every semester discussing with my students prior conceptions of writing and where they come from, and then shift the discussion to what kinds of writing we engage and interact with in our everyday lives. An interesting disconnect often comes up between writing identity and writing practices—students frequently reveal that they don't see themselves as writers, but then realize they actually spend much of their time reading and responding to different kinds of writing. Writing is an integral part of the ways we navigate the world, which is what makes it such an interesting subject to study.

Some of the pieces in this issue might surprise you, either in subject matter or genre. Did you know that literacy is more than a skill developed in school? Or that the social media platforms you use every day are worthy of scholarly inquiry? How about that there are various ways to approach the writing you'll do in your composition courses? While some people might hesitate at this freedom to choose, these courses are meant to equip you with genre knowledge that will help you make these kinds of rhetorical decisions effectively, based on your exigence and audience. But keep in mind that you're already doing this work every day, potentially without even realizing it, every time you compose a text message or a tweet, send an email to a professor, choose the perfect filter for a picture, make a to-do list or note in your planner, or come up with a hashtag to gain followers or likes. You've already developed different literacies, genre knowledge, and rhetorical awareness that you employ in daily writing tasks both in and out of the classroom.

You'll find that the authors in this issue have based their works around their developed conceptions of writing, through both their subject matter and genre. In unique and important ways,

these authors explore how literacy, writing, and rhetoric work in their worlds, considering how the languages they've learned, media they've consumed, and social media platforms they've used have impacted themselves and society.

The first piece in this issue is "Chinks in My Armor: Reclaiming One's Voice" by Julie Wan. This powerful literacy narrative details Wan's experiences assimilating to American English and education after moving from China to the United States at the age of three. Wan is thoughtful and honest in her analysis of the ways her literacy development was impacted by her cultural identity, socioeconomic circumstances and opportunities, and the costs of affiliation that multilingual students often experience. Wan's blend of metaphor and analysis make for an engaging and impactful read.

The next piece is also by Wan, shifting from analyzing her literacy development to a current literacy practice in "You're Filtering Me Out: Reviewing Snapchat Lenses through a Rhetorical Lens." This article is a rhetorical criticism of Snapchat and its use of filtered lenses that change the face shape of its users. Readers will be interested to see how Wan applies multiple rhetorical theories and feminist perspectives to explore the impact these filters have on female users, and Snapchat users might find themselves thinking more critically about this social media platform.

The third article also takes up the impact of social media on its users in "The Future of Voting in a Misinformed Society" by Flavio Ortiz. Ortiz explores how the proliferation of fake news on social media influenced the 2016 presidential election through secondary research and a content analysis of major news outlets' Facebook pages, as well as how voters might contend with this issue in future elections through interviews with prospective voters. This timely piece should be of interest to all voters, and students can also learn from the dual method approach Ortiz applies to gain insight into his research questions.

Continuing with social media as a research subject, Chelsea Harrison considers the different uses of social media platforms in "College Students and Social Media: A Graphic Report." You'll notice that Harrison uses illustration in her writing, and by presenting her research through the genre of a comic book, she details her process, establishes the conversation around this topic through prior research, and shares her findings in rhetorically effective and creative ways. The exigence of Harrison's piece will likely resonate with readers, and students can also see this as an example of the possibilities for writing both in subject matter and presentation of their research.

Finally, we see another alternative genre used to present Ryan Johnson's research in his work, "LGBT+ Media: What Went Wrong." Johnson writes up his research as a screenplay, which is especially appropriate given his subject matter. Johnson's study surveys members of the LGBT+ community and analyzes LGBT+ representation in popular TV shows such as *Glee*, *Degrassi: The New Generation*, *Will & Grace*, and *Modern Family*, and considers how some of the issues with the character tropes, dialogue, and story arcs might impact LGBT+ viewers and audience's perceptions of the LGBT+ community. Employing the genre conventions of a screenplay, Johnson presents himself as the narrator and uses dialogue and stage directions to discuss the findings of his research and suggestions for addressing the lack of diversity, normalization, inclusion of transgender characters, and other issues brought to light by his study. Readers will find that Johnson's screenplay is both an entertaining and important work, and students can see this as another example of how they might consider alternative genres that make sense for achieving the exigence of their writing and reaching their intended audiences.

We hope that you enjoy reading through the works in this issue of *Stylus*, and that they might inspire you to explore the possibilities for what you can do with your own writing, both in and out of the classroom. We also hope that you'll consider submitting your own work for publication in the journal; at one time or another, all of the students published here were sitting in a composition class, just like you. To read about their experiences (and, sometimes, struggles) along the way from receiving an assignment to being published, be sure to take a look at the writer's statements accompanying each piece.

If you're interested in submitting work to *Stylus*, simply ask your Composition I or II instructor to forward the piece you'd like to submit to the journal and we'll take care of the rest. If you have any questions about this process, please feel free to contact the *Stylus* co-editors, Matt Bryan at Matthew.Bryan@ucf.edu or me at Megan.Lambert@ucf.edu.

-Megan Lambert
Stylus Co-Editor