

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 4

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We consider ourselves very fortunate to be involved in the fourth volume of *The York Scholar*. The articles published in this volume are exceptionally strong, and genuinely reflect the intellectual, social, and professional interests of York College students. We believe that faculty and students alike will find much to enjoy in these pages. One mark of an outstanding academic paper by an undergraduate is its ability to engage the reader on an intellectual level. We are confident that you will find much food for thought in Volume 4. As you read the articles, we encourage you to reflect on just those places in the papers where you raise objections, want to challenge a point or claim, or simply disagree with a conclusion. These moments in the text are precisely where our students succeed in stepping outside of the teacher-student dynamic and effectively meet us as interlocutors or peers.

The York Scholar is just four years old. At the outset, we envisioned a journal of students' engagement with scholarship and knew we would publish a collection of papers representing some of the best work from the College-Wide Writing Program. Our principal aim was to share with the College community the quality of student writing at York. But the journal has grown and developed in ways we did not imagine at the outset of the project. *The York Scholar* is available as both a print and an online journal. It is in the York College Library's listing of full text databases, and can be

accessed at <http://www.york.cuny.edu/yorkscholar/>. It is used regularly as an instructional resource in Writing 301, Writing 302, and Writing 303. And, of course, the print version is widely available across the College. New this year, *The York Scholar* features student artwork. Sylvia Aviles, the artist whose work appears on the cover, created the portrait entitled “Woman” under the direction of her teacher, Nina Buxenbaum. We are very excited about this development and hope that student artwork becomes a regular element of cover designs for the journal.

The York Scholar is a collection of outstanding papers written by students enrolled in the College-Wide Writing Program, an independent program offering three different versions of the College’s required, upper-division introduction to college-level research and academic writing. Generally known as “Writing 300,” the Writing Program’s course offerings are tailored to the research, documentation, and rhetorical demands and conventions of specific groups of majors. Writing 301 (Research and Writing for the Major) is designed for students enrolled in the Humanities and Social Sciences; Writing 302 (Research and Writing for the Sciences) is the course for students in the Natural Sciences and Mathematics; and Writing 303 (Research and Writing for Professional Programs) is the course for all other majors and programs.

All three courses provide students with a hands-on introduction to the research process. Students locate and narrow a research question connected in some way to their own disciplines, personal interests, and/or career goals. The rigorous curriculum requires students to bring the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills they have developed in their general education courses to their own research agendas. They learn to locate and selectively read materials from relevant online and print sources, selecting from a range of books, peer-reviewed journals, and web-based publications. Students learn to analyze and synthesize source material to develop their own arguments as they produce drafts of their papers, and they revise their work based on feedback from both their professors and their peers. As their research projects take shape, they determine an organization for their papers that appropriately addresses their questions, and ultimately produce a fi-

nal paper that conforms to the style conventions of their particular fields. The range of research projects pursued by students in the College-Wide Writing Program is restricted only by the imagination and intellectual interest of the students themselves.

As before, we have selected papers for inclusion based on the quality of research, analysis, synthesis, and writing. It should not surprise anyone to learn that the contents of this volume are representative of the variety of projects students tackle in their Writing 300 courses. Ana Boujja, in “Pre-Term Babies,” takes on a major public health issue with significant financial and quality of life implications. She examines what we know about the factors that increase one’s risk of a premature birth, and finds that race, weight, and lifestyle choices all correlate with rates of pre-term birth. Additionally, she explores health care interventions that can help reduce the risks, finding that public health awareness campaigns, family planning counseling, and pre-natal care can all help reduce the risks of premature birth through their impact on behavior.

Derell Kennedo’s “Reconstruction and its Effects on African-Americans” works with the historical scholarship on Reconstruction. Kennedo is primarily interested in the impact of post-Civil War Reconstruction on the opportunities for African-Americans, and in the eventual erosion of many of the legal, political, and economic advances made in the immediate post-war period. He examines the Presidential Reconstruction period, Congressional Reconstruction, and the Reconstruction Acts, and considers the role of the Ku Klux Klan in rolling back the political and economic gains fostered by the Radical Republicans. But Kennedo also explains that the unraveling of a Republican coalition, a Supreme Court unsympathetic to the Reconstruction Acts, and economic developments that shifted attention away from equality and opportunity for African-Americans, were also major factors in the collapse of Reconstruction by 1877.

Jannine Pizarro’s “Che: the Misunderstood Icon” is a fascinating essay that explores how Che Guevara the revolutionary became a “global icon” that even peace activists could embrace. Working in historical and popular cultural scholarship, Pizarro is

interested in understanding how the image of a Marxist revolutionary came to be celebrated within capitalist societies. How could the image of Che become so disconnected from the historical Che? Part of the answer, for Pizarro, is found in the idea of a “functional cultural icon,” a concept she borrows from Kevin Lause and Jack Nachbar’s *Popular Culture: An Introductory Text* (1992). According to Pizarro, “It is because Che Guevara’s image has started to appear on useful items (mugs, key rings, soap, cigarettes, underwear, and so on) that people are driven away from the real meaning of Che.” The historical image of Che is altered by the utility of the commodities bearing his image; we are left with a visual image and the thing bearing that image.

In “Black Reparations: It is Time for America to Fulfill its Promise,” Sandra Pompey takes up the important and controversial topic of reparations for slavery. Pompey’s subtle and wide-ranging essay engages both the history of reparations and current proposals for acknowledging the injustices visited upon African-Americans. From the Emancipation Proclamation and Freedman’s Bureau, through Jim Crow and the internment of Japanese in World War II, to Brown University’s public reflection on its role in slavery, and more, Pompey builds a case for an idea of reparations that transcends financial compensation. There is much to contemplate in this essay, and some readers will find that Pompey’s ideas challenge their existing views on the subject of reparations. We encourage you to reflect on those moments in Pompey’s piece, and to consider just how she has managed to engage us on an intellectual level.

The final contribution to Volume 4, “The Rise in the Morbidity and the Mortality of Malaria is a Global Threat,” by Nestor Sapathy, takes up an important public health concern in the developing world. Sapathy’s essay is a scientific, political, and economic treatment of antimalarials and the pharmaceutical firms that produce them. This public health concern is as important as it seems intractable. Any response to malaria must address such issues as the pharmaceutical industry’s preference for monotherapeutic (single-pill) solutions, the lack of market incentives for innovation, and even the prevalence of counterfeit medications in the

developing world. For Sapathy, an important component of any solution will include an emphasis on antimalarial resistance containment through combination therapy, or the use of multiple drugs.

These five papers are informative, indicative of the kinds of research, thinking, and writing that occurs in the courses offered in the College-Wide Writing Program, and, most of all, enjoyable to read. If you are a member of the faculty, we hope these selections of academic writing by undergraduates can be a starting point for conversations about writing development. We encourage you to talk with us about the relationship between the kinds of writing valued in your own discipline and the writing in Writing 301, 302, or 303. If you are a student, we hope you will find the subject matter of these papers engaging, and their facility with source material a model for your own work. We encourage you to submit your own Writing 301, 302, or 303 paper for possible inclusion in a future volume of the journal. In keeping with the editorial practice at *The York Scholar*, the papers published here appear in essentially the same form that the students' professors received them, with only light copyediting or purposes of publication. We have not altered the students' writing in any substantive ways.

This journal would not have been possible without the support of the Office of Academic Affairs and the Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation. The College-Wide Writing Program provided important clerical assistance, while Printing Services once again handled the physical printing of *The York Scholar*. Of course, the real work behind the contributions to *The York Scholar* was completed before we read a single submission. We owe a debt of gratitude to the faculty and students who invested so much intellectual energy into Writing 301, 302, and 303 in Spring 2006 and Fall 2006. Without their hard work and joint commitment to learning and writing development there would be no papers to review. Thank you.