



TEXT

Journal of writing and writing courses

ISSN: 1327-9556 | <https://textjournal.scholasticahq.com/>

TEXT Vol 29 No 1 2025

Editorial

– Caleb González (University of Texas Rio Grande Valley) and Janelle Adsit (California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt)

A global resurgence of autocracy and tyranny is upon us (Applebaum, 2024; Reed, 2022; Snyder, 2018). One aim of this resurgence is to slam the brakes on progress related to what it means to value and embrace various ways of thinking, making, and being in the world. In the United States, for example, we see increases in book censorship despite opposition from educational organisations (“Freedom to Teach”). Last year in the state of New South Wales, the Cumberland City Council sparked controversy by banning books featuring same-sex couples from their libraries (Gunther, 2024). Both cases are a reminder that censorship is driven by power. Tyranny maintains power through ideologies that are pro-conformity, anti-communal, anti-relational, and anti-consent.

While it is just one example of autocracy, book censorship is about banning knowledges, erasing histories, and controlling representations with a relentless insistence on conformity. Our educational systems are implicated. Learning institutions have roots in systems of dominance and domination. We are susceptible to the autocratic manoeuvres that enforce obedience – that pre-program our mindsets and practices toward an assumption of a societal “norm” that serves centralised power.

This is a moment to define and assert for ourselves what we want education and writing to be: Can we wrest education back as a space to confront and disrupt authoritarian power? The closure of independent news outlets; the threat to universities, scholarship, and creativity; the persecution and exile of scholars, journalists and whistleblowers; censorship, suppression, disenfranchisement; and the many other hallmarks of authoritarian regimes – these require our vigilance and our resistance. As writers, it is our power and responsibility to insist on an imagination for a better world. As Kimberlé Crenshaw explains:

They have been willing to throw everything that we have accomplished to perfect this democracy onto the fire. Then what is our response? What do we have to do differently?

We know we have to fight collaboratively, we have to fight collectively, we have to fight creatively, but we also have to fight with an idea that we refuse to allow any of what we have created to be lost. (African American Policy Forum, 2025)

We can embody anti-authoritarianism in how we show up for one another, living and working in a way that honors the ideals of equity and dignity. We suggest consent [1] as a frame: In how we daily act and engage, how can we destabilise obedience-driven power relations that replicate autocracy? In sharp contrast to obedience and conformity, consent calls us toward a human-centered, relational orientation that respects difference and individual autonomy.

While we might think of the word “consent” as existing within a legal, transactional frame, the word’s etymology points to its larger relevance and connotative value. The word “consent” conveys an individual’s *empowerment* in one’s ability to grant or deny assent. The word carries the meaning of one’s “right, power, or will to oppose”. In affirming individual autonomy and self-determination, the term also carries in its meaning the power and potential of the collective. Deriving from the Latin *consentire*, literally translated as “to feel together”, consent invokes a sense of interrelation as it also locates the body and the connection between thought and feeling: a sense of *sentipensante*, in the root *sentire* “to feel”.

To create a true culture of consent entails vigilance about the context by which assent is won. A “yes” is not assent if it is compelled or coerced. If a “no” is not safe, then the corresponding “yes” is not free. As writers, our work is to expose societal and political despotism, to find the means to respond, to create what will bring people together in feeling and in truth.

Many creative writers have modelled consent-based cultures: Felicia Rose Chavez’s *Anti-Racist Writing Workshop* encourages workshop processes that are co-created and that authorise all writers to shape how their writing will be discussed and received. The poet Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha understands consent as a disability justice principle, recognising each person’s wholeness and worth outside of capitalist productivity and each person’s right to sovereign decision regarding one’s pace, practice, and ways of being. Poet and activist adrienne maree brown offers emergent strategies that foster authentic togetherness and “move at the speed of trust” – trust that is compelled or assumed is not trust, but is compliance.

Our urgent questions persist: How can we best advocate for writing and pedagogy that confronts aims to stifle our voices, stories, and processes of knowledge making? How does our writing move toward liberation that breaks from the lines drawn by power? These questions are important, but the questions alone aren’t liberatory. Asking the questions, we continue – as we resist every means by which hegemony wins our consent.

Notes

[1] The editors (Phillips, S., Livingston, V., Oleksiak, T., and West-Puckett, S., 2024) of the upcoming Special Issue of *College English* entitled *Informed Refusal: Theories, Pedagogies, and Methods for Imagining Consent in English* define rhetorical consent as “the idea that we can invent the rhetorics necessary to negotiate our power, pleasure, autonomy,

interdependence, participation and bodies within and beyond institutions of higher learning, as queer and historically marginalized people have always done. In this way, consent becomes a politic of world-building offering alternative possibilities for new futures.”

In this issue

Scholarly contributors to Volume 29, Issue 1 (April 2025) of *TEXT* include a significant number of authors publishing scholarship with the journal for the first time. We welcome original new scholarly work from Carrie Tiffany (La Trobe University), who reflects on the mechanical intertext in her novel *Exploded View*; Soren Tai Smith (University of Melbourne), who writes on self-shedding and decreativity in Kafka and Weil; Patricia Webb (Arizona State University), who discusses the inclusion of social justice themed texts in writing courses; Lilian Roberts (University of South Australia), who explores Nachträglichkeit in poetic autobiography; Anders Villani (RMIT University), who contributes new thinking on trauma and poetics in Kate Lilley's *Tilt* and his own collection, *Totality*; Annabel Wilson (Massey University) whose contribution to this issue explores re-arrangement in Lynn Jenner's *Lost and Gone Away*; Marija Peričić (University of Melbourne) who looks at textual haunting in the case of sumazdat reading practices; and Shelley-Anne Smith (Deakin University), who considers emotional contagion and embodied empathy in literary posthumanism. We welcome back Ruth Jackson (Deakin University), who first published with us in Volume 26 (2022). Ruth's newest scholarly contribution to *TEXT* explores travel writing in and from Ethiopia.

Engagement with TEXT

During the twelve months to 31 March 2025, *TEXT* received 22.8K unique visitors, generating 35.9K total article page views and 4.7K article downloads. These are our most substantial readership and engagement figures to date, and they are testament to collective efforts of our team. Many people help our open-access journal to thrive, from our hardworking editorial team and board to contributors and generous peer reviewers. We are also grateful to the AAWP National Executive Committee and the many AAWP members whose annual subscriptions help to financially sustain the journal. *TEXT* continues to enjoy a high quality rating at [Scimago](#), where it has been rated Q1 for Literature and Literary Theory for the second year running (2023).

Most *TEXT* readers find us via a direct link, suggesting a strong culture of digital sharing and personal recommendations among regular readers and contributors. We encourage readers and contributors to continue to share DOI links widely and to reference valuable scholarly content you have found in the journal over the past three decades. Over the twelve months to mid-March 2025, our pages were mainly viewed by readers from Australia (40.6K page views), the United States (9.7K page views), Great Britain (4.3K page views), India (1.6K page views), Canada (1.4K page views), New Zealand (1.4K page views), Germany (0.9K page views), China (0.9K page views), the Philippines (0.8K page views) and Indonesia (0.7K page views). Readers from Taiwan, Norway, Russia, Hong Kong and Austria were also regular visitors.

The scholarly article with the largest number of page views during the twelve months to 31 March 2025 was “Written with the forest” by Ilka Tampke (La Trobe University), which appeared in *TEXT Special Issue 71*, 2024 (667 page views; 545 unique visitors; 43 downloads). The most downloaded article over the same period was “Terra (in)cognita: Mapping academic writing” by Sean Sturm (University of Auckland), published in *TEXT* Vol 16, No 2, 2012 (545 page views; 535 unique visitors; 85 downloads). *TEXT* Prose and Poetry April 2024 was the PDF which gained the most unique visitors (718 page views; 590 unique visitors; 24 total downloads) over the same period.

Our list of peer reviewers continues to grow at TEXT. We have 232 scholarly reviewers registered with our database and our contributors regularly comment on the high quality of the advice they provide on draft manuscripts: thank you if you are one of our valued reviewers. Our scholarly article acceptance rate for the five years to 31 March 2025 sits at 55%, with an average decision period of between 3 and 4 months. If you’d like to join our scholarly reviewer community, please contact us directly at textgeneraleditors@aawp.org.au and include a copy of your CV as well as a sense of your research interests and expertise.

A new annual prize at TEXT

The Nigel Krauth Prize is a new annual prize at TEXT. The prize remembers the contributions of co-founding TEXT editor, Nigel Krauth, who was Managing Editor of the journal from 1997 to 2023. The inaugural winner was announced at the 2024 AAWP annual conference in November 2024.

The winner of the Nigel Krauth Prize 2024:

Jessica White, for the scholarly article
[Moving between worlds: Creativity, disability and storytelling](#)
TEXT Vol 28, Issue 1, 2024

Highly Commended for the Nigel Krauth Prize 2024:

Stef Markidis, for the scholarly article:
[Writing in the wake of movement: Deleuze, dance and life writing](#)
TEXT Vol 28, Issue 1, 2024

Congratulations Jessica and Stef!

All publications in TEXT between 1 November 2023 and 31 October 2024 were automatically eligible for this award. The TEXT editorial team selected the winner and highly commended works based on the following criteria: relevance to the journal’s aims and scope; style and readability; quality of the research/innovation/analysis; potential impact or contribution to the discipline.

The prizewinner receives a \$500 cash prize. The inaugural prize was contributed by the Australasian Association of Writing Programs and we thank the members of the AAWP National Executive for their support.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Ben Stubbs for his service as Special Issue Editor. Ben has been with *TEXT* in this role for three years, and we value his contribution maintaining the quality of our Special Issue series. He has played an important role in the curation of the Special Issues content and in mentoring our guest editors, as well as in maintaining and updating *TEXT* journal style. Julianne van Loon will act in the Special Issues Editor role during 2024, in addition to her Managing Editor role, working alongside Ella Jeffrey to deliver a streamlined Special Issues offering. We hope to be able to announce a new Special Issues co-editor towards the end of the year, and we thank Ella Jeffrey for her ongoing contributions in this role.

Thank you to our copyediting interns for this edition of *TEXT*: Annabel Holt, Erin Byers, Molly Davidson and Victoria Zhang. Our interns are appointed and mentored by Tracy O'Shaughnessy and Eugenie Baulch, both of the Masters of Writing & Publishing program at RMIT University and we are grateful for their excellent contributions.

References

- African American Policy Forum. (2025 Jan. 23). *Kimberlé crenshaw at the national urban league demand diversity emergency session on DEI* [Video]. YouTube.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vg3buxrislq>
- Applebaum, A. (2024). *Autocracy, inc.: The dictators who want to rule the world*. Penguin.
- brown, a. m. (2017). *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds*. AK press.
- Chavez, F. R. (2021). *The antiracist writing workshop how to decolonize the creative classroom*. Haymarket Books.
- Freedom to teach: Statement against banning books. *National Council of Teachers of English*.
<https://ncte.org/freedom-teach-banning-books/>
- Gunther, C. R. (2024 May 10). *Banned down under: exploring australia's censorship of literature through research for a podcast*. Catherine Rose Gunther.
<https://catherinerosegunther.com/2024/05/10/banned-down-under-exploring-australias-censorship-of-literature-through-the-making-of-a-podcast/>
- Online Etymology Dictionary. (2025). "Consent". <https://www.etymonline.com/word/consent>
- Phillips, S., Livingston, V., Oleksiak, T, and West-Puckett, S. (2024). Informed refusal: Theories, pedagogies, and methods for imagining consent in English studies. Call for proposals of the special issue of *College English*. <https://ncte.org/resources/journals/college-english/cecalls/>
- Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. (2018). *Care work: Dreaming disability justice*. Arsenal Pulp Press.

Reed, A. (2022). *Tyranny on the rise: the steady growth of authoritarianism worldwide*. the vietnamese. <https://www.thevietnamese.org/2022/02/tyranny-on-the-rise-the-steady-growth-of-authoritarianism-worldwide/>

Snyder, T. (2018). *The road to unfreedom*. Penguin.