2019-02-08

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Recommended Citation

Sue Norton and Laurence W. Mazzeno, 'When Literature Scholars Write for General Readers: A Two-Person, First-Person Essay,' *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 50, no. 2 (January 2019): 124–38
doi:10.3138/jsp.50.2.04.

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version of record

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When Literature Scholars Write for General Readers: A Two-Person, First-Person Essay

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Sue Norton is a lecturer of English at The Dublin Institute of Technology who has published widely in scholarly journals as well as in non-academic books and magazines. She is especially interested in life writing and the personal essay. Together she and Mazzeno are co-editors of *European Perspectives on John Updike*, published by Camden House (2018).

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Laurence W. Mazzeno, president emeritus of Alvernia University, has authored or edited twenty books, including two editions of *Masterplots* (fourteen volumes), as well as numerous refereed publications, reference articles, reviews, notes, and essays in regional magazines.

Abstract

This dually authored first-person essay offers a narrative account of the far-ranging writing experiences of two well-established academics who, like many others working in higher education, contribute writing to mainstream publications as well as to scholarly ones. The essay considers the implications for professional and personal reputations when material targeted at one kind of audience is easily accessible by another through internet 'context

collapse.’ It argues for an inextricable connection between authorial ethics and the essential rigour of all good writing, and it encourages scholar-writers to invest their energies in non-scholarly writing for its value to society.

Keywords: scholarly and non-scholarly publishing, context collapse, academic reputation, academic writing, reference writing, personal essay

Scholarship in every traditional academic discipline involves writing. Historians write about the past. Geologists write about the earth. Physicists write about matter and energy in the universe. But those of us engaged in literary studies write about writing. Like an archaeologist on a dig, the professor of English is ever engaged in fieldwork, ceaselessly up to the elbows in words. To conduct and publish research into language or literature is to write words about other words.

This is not to say that word-scholars, so to speak, are necessarily talented writers. Literary criticism, theory, and analysis can be as turgid as academic writing is reputed to be. As Stephen Pinker argues in his 2014 article ‘Why Academics Stink at Writing,’ ‘academics live in two universes, the world of the thing they study (the poetry of Elizabeth Bishop, the development of language in children . . .) and the world of their profession (getting articles published, going to conferences, keeping up with the trends and gossip).’¹ Pinker believes that it is easy for researchers to confuse these two worlds and produce lacklustre prose that suffers from an array of shortcomings. He reminds us that ‘the perennial winners of the Bad Writing contest’ run by Denis Dutton in the late 1990s were, ironically, ‘professors of English.’²

Indeed, some professors of English may be so over-invested in language that they are rendered helplessly hyper-controlling in its deployment. They become mired in the sorts of meta-discourses that, again in Pinker’s phrasing, betray a ‘self-presentation’ that arises from

‘defensiveness against any impression that they may be slacker than their peers in hewing to the norms of the guild.’³

Be that as it may, some of us in literary studies do produce readable prose and do succeed in reaching, and affecting, target readerships both inside and outside the academy. The desire to be immersed in words is, of course, common to language and literature professors, who are well positioned to nurture a passion for words in others. Whether we are interrogating the work of Elizabeth Bishop with undergraduates or writing about her work for our peers, we are, on a daily basis, at play in our playground. In fact, we are at play in our playground when we are writing anything at all.

Crossover writing, or academic writing for the public at large as opposed to other scholars, is a pursuit that some of us freely and rather perplexingly choose—perplexing because it has very little institutional value for our career advancement. It is perplexing as well because writing for the wider world demands that we make ourselves vulnerable on new fronts. When we write for a specialized audience of our disciplinary peers, we subject our ideas to informed scrutiny. We proceed with all due diligence. But when we write for a general readership, we know we must resist the exacting refinement of terms that is so normal to academic writing. We may let a little caution go to the wind. And if we do, we run the risk of making assertions that are, or at least feel, more easily assailable. In modern textual dissemination, criticism can be instantaneous and sharp. Those of us who have published work with online newspapers or magazines may have been stunned by the comments section, where, at keystroke speed, readers agree or disagree, praise, rebut, castigate, or even denigrate. As academics, we are accustomed to narrow readerships that are, for the most part, either silent or judicious in their critiques. General readers in large numbers can be unnerving.

Yet some of us do venture out. Despite institutional metrics that privilege monographs and refereed journal articles, many scholars, both inside and outside literary studies, choose to write for wide audiences and across genres. Book reviews, for instance, including those of scholarly books, are of little worth in the promotion stakes, yet academics remain willing to write them, even senior academics. In his article ‘The Scholarly Book Review in the Humanities: An Academic Cinderella?’, John W. East posits the hypothesis of Ken Hyland, who sees the book review as attractive to scholars in the humanities because it offers a ‘rhetorical platform’ or ‘alternative forum.’⁴ The book review seduces with the promise of offering creativity inside a more or less familiar framework for readers. It allows the writer some leeway to reveal personality, some opportunity to pass collegial judgement. The book review also confers professional standing as well as a fresh chance to experience the pleasure of a text, not only by reading something new but by writing about it as well. Other forms of writing offer similar satisfactions, and more.

As for ourselves, the authors of this essay, we are scholarly collaborators who have also written separately and widely for general publics. Some of what we have published might be considered crossover writing, meaning, for us, essays and articles related to literature and criticism in non-refereed publications directed toward general readers. But we have also produced other, more free-ranging work in multiple genres that has nothing to do with the academy or with our disciplines. Because neither of us writes under a pseudonym, we are easily identified as the lecturer and professor emeritus that we are. Reputational considerations can arise, as can concerns about professional integrity. Here, we offer two narrative accounts of the reservations, tribulations, and gratifications that academically trained scholars may experience when they write afield.

Personal Exposure and the Working Academic (Sue Norton)

So accustomed have I become to the detached tones of scholarly discourse, both as a writer and a reader, that even my transition here into the first person prompts an uncomfortable feeling of self-exposure, of academic convention breached in a gambit for shared understanding. My earliest motivation as a child-reader was to seek parallel and alternative experiences in fiction. Wider examples of how to live, of how to think or to view the world, were the reward for hours spent turning pages. In this respect, I am not unlike other lifelong readers. But after I became an adult and transitioned into academic life, I eventually felt the need to offer some perspective, not just to seek it in the writing of others. During my doctoral training, I wrote literary criticism. After I secured my permanent position, I began to write also of classroom practice and pedagogical interventions. Both of these types of writing were ‘backed up’ with research. Academic writing tends to be safe. Assertions made in peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books are undergirded by reference to other peer-reviewed sources. Engaged with established findings and observations, the writer enters a conversation that has already built momentum and accumulated rigour.

Indeed, one’s reputation as an academic rests to some extent on the thoroughness, and thus the calibre, of one’s published research. Even relatively low-profile academics, those of us not regarded as public intellectuals, will proceed from an occupational imperative to remain well guarded. Although scholarly literary criticism is not devoid of humour and irony, and is sometimes stylish too, rarely does it offer a glimpse into the personality or life of its writer. Here are a few sentences from an article I once wrote about systems theory and John Updike’s magnum opus, his Rabbit novels:

Whether Updike can be said to mythologize women to achieve his ends is a subject for another discussion. But certainly he makes sacrificial lambs of girls. June, Jill, Judy, and Annabelle serve to focus the attentions of his questing protagonist, for the

Angstrom family and the narrative. Even by their absences and shadow presences, girls ‘regulate’ the actions of the other characters.⁵

In the surrounding sentences, naturally, I delivered a handful of textual examples to support my assertion. Also, naturally, I did not offer any reference to my own life as a daughter in an American family or any insight into whether I myself may have served a regulatory function within it. The article was about Updike’s girl characters, not about me as a former girl. Any vulnerability I may have felt in seeing the article published in the *John Updike Review* in 2014 was related to the prospect that Updike scholars and others working in American literature might find fault with its reasoning.

But in publishing work that has touched on my own family life, I have felt vulnerability of a different order. In 2016 I wrote about growing up with a sibling who has special needs:

Duty can be oceanic, and many of us will stand, as I have in my wave dreams, stupefied, under the beneficent sun, frantic to know what to do: dive under, run to shore, or get carried aloft, possibly out to sea? Who can I rescue if I’m swept away? And who will rescue me?⁶

While, in and of itself, I have no regret about exposing my own anxieties in this particular article or any others I have written before it or since, I do find myself emotionally uneasy at the prospect that both academic and non-academic readers, including friends and colleagues, will peruse work of mine that was intended for a singularly different audience.

For instance, my peer-reviewed journal article about the deconstruction of social formations in feminist speculative fiction may make me seem remote to my friends, while my magazine piece about an argument I had with my husband in Paris on our tenth wedding anniversary may feel too up close and personal for my colleagues. (Not that my husband was delighted, either.)

Social media researchers have used the term *context collapse* to describe the potentially disturbing possibility of indeterminate addressees accessing our diverse writings and other postings on the internet.⁷ In 2012 Jessica Vitak wrote of ‘the flattening out of multiple distinct audiences in one’s social network, such that people from different contexts become part of a singular group of message recipients.’⁸ This phenomenon of readers from discrete or overlapping areas of our personal and professional lives having an unmediated view of our writing, and therefore of the often dissimilar ways in which we express ourselves, can be unsettling, whether we are academics or not.

I made a choice some years ago to inventory all of my published writing on one website. I do not upload everything I have ever written, but I do list everything. Even if I did not collect my academic and non-academic work in one virtual space, most of it would be retrievable anyway, via a name search. In other words, anyone looking for me online will find a range of writings and references. Theoretically, a panellist preparing to interview me for academic promotion will discover that I once composed a prayer, a kind of personal revision of the Nicene Creed, which was published in a Unitarian journal. I may find myself wondering whether I over-shared my spiritual questing in a way that could undermine a more desirable intellectual persona. Or, if I discover that my undergraduate students have come upon my essays about wave dreams, or about aging or homesickness, will I feel exposed and self-conscious in the classroom? Yes, I will, if I understand personal authority and personal vulnerability as antithetical to each other.

They needn’t be, though. Vulnerability is an ordinary part of the very act of asking questions in writing or, more specifically, of writing for others. Too often, though, it gives rise to the defensiveness that Stephen Pinker identified. A confident writer or writer-researcher will accept vulnerability as a normal part of inquiry. Most academic articles pose

questions and work to reduce ignorance en route to new hypotheses. As well guarded as the academic writer must be, risk-free inquiry is, as a premise, oxymoronic.

Etymologically, *essay* means ‘to test the quality of.’ To compose an essay means, literally, to try, and trying, by definition, involves risk. While not all academic writing takes the form of the essay, it does typically assume its main characteristic in that it endeavours to prove or demonstrate something. Academic writing seeks to bring the reader to a higher ground of understanding.

Some years ago a professor of French at an Irish university wrote a well-researched indictment, in book form, of managerialism in the Irish higher education sector. It was a compelling, disturbing read, and it was fearless too. I was invited to review it in a leading British weekly, where I agreed with its premise and offered supporting examples from my own work experience in Irish higher education. I knew that my assertions would have to be airtight, but I feared that I would fail to anticipate some alternative statistic, some counter-evidence. I could find myself without retreat. If, for instance, the president of my institution wanted to ‘clear something up,’ he would of course be granted ink by the publication. Would I then become *embroiled*? Or appear foolish? But I proceeded with the submission mainly because I felt humbled and challenged by the courage of the French professor who had written the book. When my review appeared, I could see it get quick traction because, alas, in our age of instantaneousness, we witness in real time the fate of what we publish.

I need not have worried, though. In life, so too in writing: we tend to feel more exposed than we really are. My review had its fifteen minutes. Neither it nor the book on which it centred caused much upset or, looked at differently, caused enough upset. Neoliberal managerialism in higher education is alive and well in Ireland, as indeed am I. But in terms of my own creativity, I will do well to remember that it was my vulnerability as an academic, as a writer, and as a publicly exposed opiner that logically situated me to write the review in the

first place. Had I not felt compelled by the book writer's ideas, and by some sense of duty to share my own experience of what I termed the *odeur de bureaucracy* of higher education, I would have had no basis on which to venture forth.

This forward venturing not only anticipates readers, but requires them. Writing intended only for the self is precisely as safe *as the self*, no more and no less. But to reveal one's writing to others is to invite external scrutiny and maybe criticism. This is true whether writing for general readers or for readers in one's own discipline or profession. For many of us working in literary or language studies, to write or not to write is as much an existential consideration as a vocational one. As professors of English (or French, etc.), we dwell in words as the primary site of our investigations: they are both our implements and our findings. Naturally, we handle them with care.

In and Out of the Academy: Object Lessons from Fifty Years of Writing for Diverse Readerships (Laurence Mazzeno)

Like my colleague Sue Norton, my interest in writing began as a reader but moved swiftly into producing my own work. While much of my adolescent fiction was, I am certain, hopelessly adolescent, my venture into essay writing did lead to my first publication in 1968 at the age of twenty-one: an op-ed piece in the local Catholic newspaper arguing that priests should be allowed to marry. At the time I knew little about the conventions of journalism or public discourse—about 'hewing to the norms of the guild,' as Pinker writes—or about the hazards of exposure that Sue describes in the preceding section of this essay. Rather, I look back and see myself as something like the speaker in Bob Seger's song 'Against the Wind': 'Wish I didn't know now what I didn't know then.' Handling words with care from one decade to the next, and to the next, can begin to feel like a verbal marathon, a running against the shifting winds of each new assignment's editorial expectations. Nevertheless, my 'career'

was launched, or maybe ordained, by the Catholic newspaper, and it was to take some instructive twists and turns that have given me insight into the challenges of writing for various audiences, especially when one identifies primarily as an academic.

My acceptance of a commission in the U.S. Army in 1968 led to a three-year stint writing military correspondence, regulations, and lesson plans—almost all unattributed. My academic career began in 1972 when the Army sent me to graduate school to prepare for an assignment on the faculty at the U.S. Military Academy. While at Tulane University, I gained competence in what Sue describes above as the two kinds of writing common in academe, refereed and non-refereed material related to one's scholarly discipline. Another military assignment in 1977 interrupted my academic career and returned me to a world where anonymity and format are often prized over creativity. But in 1980 I had the good fortune to be assigned to the faculty at the U.S. Naval Academy, where I spent seven of my last nine years on active duty. My time at USNA solidified my placement in the academic world. I became first an assistant professor of English, then an executive assistant of the division of English and history, and eventually associate professor and chair of the English department. During these years, I had the good fortune of being invited to serve on the editorial staff of a scholarly journal, *The Arnoldian* (now *Nineteenth-Century Prose*), and to devote time to original scholarship. Somewhat fortuitously, an independent publisher asked me to write several reference articles, which required skills complementary to those used in creating original scholarship. An opportunity to write an annotated bibliography further expanded my range in writing for an audience other than my academic peers.

In 1989 I retired from active duty and sought out a position that faculty colleagues often describe as going to 'the dark side.' While serving as a dean, chief academic officer, and college president, I continued my career as a scholar but also began to write for new audiences: the publics who supported the institutions at which I worked, and peers in higher

education. Much of this work was argumentative in the technical sense: speeches, articles, op-ed pieces, open letters, and white papers designed to promote liberal arts education. Among my publications in this arena, several stand out because they were distributed nationally. Two were aimed at helping faculty and staff at other institutions learn how to approach their presidents with good ideas about topics such as improving technology or dealing with the growing problem of drug and alcohol abuse on campus; a third was targeted at fellow presidents to explain why they should invest in technology. A fourth appeared in a publication designed to educate Pennsylvania legislators on the role that private institutions play in providing higher education to non-traditional students in the commonwealth.⁹ I must admit that I fell into this kind of writing somewhat by accident—usually producing essays or speeches at the request of someone in higher education—but soon discovered, as Sue has, that the response to such work can be immediate and not always flattering. Thickness of skin is required to expose one's ideas to colleagues who are certain that they need no advice on how to run their institutions.

Something I gradually learned in these multiple contexts was that when writing for other professionals, one often must put aside Alexander Pope's prescription for great writing—where we aim for something 'which oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed'¹⁰—in favor of Ezra Pound's dictum, 'Make it new.'¹¹ Top-rated journals prize originality over felicity of expression. The point of most scholarly publications in the humanities is to add something to the body of knowledge on an author or work, a historical figure or event, or other discipline-specific priorities. Our peers read our scholarly work to learn something new *to them*. They are unlikely to be seeking to be impressed by style, which may serve as a bonus, because originality is the basis of the contribution.

With reference work, specifically, the focus is often on synthesis: it is the value added to pre-existing knowledge and requires significant skill because reference publications often

preclude direct quotation and footnoting. Therefore, deftness of summary is key to avoiding plagiarism while presenting, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, 'the best which has been thought and said.'¹² I have always considered it my task to read widely in order to distill key elements that might help users of my work gain a clear understanding of the subject matter. In thinking of my readers as users, I am able to establish a utility of purpose in what I offer them.

When our readers, or users, are also our peers, we are in a position to assume much. There is no need, for example, to give a lengthy description of Dickens or Tennyson for subscribers to *The Dickensian* or the *Tennyson Research Bulletin*. But that's not the case when writing for wider publics. One publisher for whom I've worked for nearly forty years, Salem Press, Inc., produces works aimed at students (and sometimes teachers at smaller institutions who must teach materials far afield from their graduate specialties). In many cases, the reference articles I've written are the first, and sometimes the only, exposure that users will have to the authors, literary works, historical figures, events, or concepts they are exploring. In such instances, my readers will not possess the expertise to formulate assessments of the content or to question with authority the approach I have taken to my subject. Many of them are subscribers (even if unconsciously) to the old adage 'if it's in print, it must be true.'

So if one is to write the equivalent of 'gospel,' one has an obligation to base it on the best available evidence. High-calibre reference work is quite different from the user-generated content of the cost-free online wiki-based encyclopedias with which we are now familiar. It demands that its writer research widely to determine—as much as one can—scholarly consensus on the subject matter. In my own writing life, this has meant reporting ethically on controversial subjects such as the early career of American frontiersman William F. Cody, neither championing his claim as the greatest buffalo hunter in America nor overstating the devastating consequences of Manifest Destiny that seemed to give westward-

moving European Americans *carte blanche* to exploit the land and its native peoples. Writing about literature for a general audience at times requires an even more stringent balancing of viewpoints and careful selection and analysis of evidence. A good case in point is Tennyson's 'Ulysses,' a poem that has generated multiple—and at times contradictory—readings since its publication in 1842. Tennyson himself said the poem was meant to convey his feeling about 'the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life' after the untimely death of his dear friend Arthur Henry Hallam.¹³ His authorial intention offers clear evidence that the poem is a call to heroic action. Still, some twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics have discerned a dark death wish in Ulysses's strident exhortations. I have written several reference articles about this poem and have always attempted to present both readings, as the following excerpt from a forthcoming publication illustrates:

Deciding to leave his kingdom in the hands of his son Telemachus, Ulysses summons a group of mariners to sail away with him to find new adventures. There is a recognized risk in such action. . . . [Yet] whatever happens, Ulysses will have the satisfaction of knowing that, despite his advancing age, he has done his best in struggling against the elements to enhance his fame. The ringing final line, 'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield,' becomes a battle cry for all who need support in their endeavors to make a better life.

However, internal and external evidence suggest that another reading is possible. The mariners Ulysses summons are not the same ones that sailed with him before; those men were all lost during Ulysses's ill-fated journey back to Ithaca from Troy. Further, his call to sail toward the west, and his remark that he and his new crew may be fortunate enough to land in the Happy Isles, suggest that this is a voyage to death. . . . Ulysses's seductive message is a call to adventure that simultaneously encourages a flight from responsibility.¹⁴

My decision to include both readings is based on my belief that educators should be guides, not dogmatists. If students are to be given an opportunity to think for themselves, those who write the materials they read must be careful not to steer them to conclusions—but to help them see that there is more than one way to view a literary odyssey or, indeed, a historical one.

When I retired from the presidency of Alvernia College in 2005, I continued to produce scholarly work and also ventured into the field of journalism. The publisher of two regional magazines in Virginia gave me the opportunity to write feature articles about local people and events. For an academic accustomed to gently paced library and internet research, liberal word counts for body text and notes, and a rather flexible approach to deadlines, this experience felt abruptly limiting. It put me in mind of Samuel Johnson's observation that 'when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates the mind wonderfully.'¹⁵ Working in the field of journalism teaches a writing scholar that exhaustive but leisurely research is a luxury afforded only to academics (and specifically to those who are already tenured). Magazine and newspaper work involves (again to quote Seger) 'deadlines and commitments' that force decisions of 'what to leave in, what to leave out.' In addition to the pressures of having something to say, a journalist is often required to say it in a set number of words. Skillful synthesis becomes paramount, as does triage: I have often found myself deleting interesting anecdotes in an effort to get essential information into articles that must fit within fixed space allocations—allocations not always determined by an editor but often by a publisher interested principally in dropping in the advertising that will pay the writers. I also learned as a jobbing journalist that being on time was more important than being eloquent: even brilliant pieces submitted late can end up in the 'kill' pile (and sometimes result in non-payment). As an editor-in-chief once told me, 'that's why we call it a *deadline*.'

Over the course of my writing life, my commitment to—some might say mania for—meeting deadlines has led to the urge to succumb to expediency and deliver what I might describe charitably as ‘rushed research.’ I do not think I have ever relied solely on one source for a scholarly essay, even if it was only a reference article (a term some of my colleagues in academe use with intentional derision). But there is always the temptation to produce what I call ‘repacked Wikipedia,’ a careful rewording of easily accessible materials that skirts the edge of plagiarism but requires little original thinking and relatively little research.

Generally, however, the academic in me has always insisted on rigour, not only as a fundament of solid research, but also as a basic function of authorial ethics. Regardless of the type of writing one undertakes, ethics, in my view, should be the primary consideration for any publishing writer. The demand that one practice ethics carries with it certain responsibilities, eloquently articulated by Robert Hauptman in a 2008 *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* article: ‘authors have responsibilities,’ among them an obligation to truth, ‘fidelity, integrity, authenticity,’ a mandate to do no harm through their work, a commitment ‘to excellence and self-fulfillment, to witnessing, testifying, and social amelioration.’¹⁶ While not every piece of writing may require a composing scholar to exercise all of these responsibilities, being cognizant of them is key to producing work that will inform and educate the audience for which that work is intended. While none of us is infallible—mistakes are bound to crop up in even the most meticulously researched publication—for those of us who identify as academics, a failure of ethical purview in our writing can summarily call into question other aspects of our professional practice, not to mention put our readers at a disadvantage.

All in a Day’s Work

Given the low status of non-peer-reviewed work in the metrics of university promotion and funding, the vulnerability involved in ‘putting oneself out there,’ the high standards required by authorial ethics, and other considerations that can give a scholarly writer pause in producing work for mainstream readers, a measure of resolve can sometimes be required to carry forward. Philosopher of science Paul Dicken makes a compelling point in his article, ‘You Want to Write for a General Audience? Really?’ He says that ‘if serious academics do not attempt to reach a wider audience, someone else will, and there is no guarantee that they are going to uphold the intellectual standards that we desire.’¹⁷ By these lights, writing for wider audiences might well be considered a duty or, at the very least, a worthwhile pursuit for those of us with the inclination and the ability. Publisher and editor Anne Trubek offers some advice. In addressing academic crossover writers, she reminds us that ‘to write a feature for a mainstream magazine on, say, the history of IBM, you do not need to read 20 books and then follow the bibliographic trail within each volume.’¹⁸ She is entirely right, of course, both in the observation itself and to point out this allure of journalistic writing: in some respects, it’s just easier. And in quickly assuring us that, in journalistic writing ‘you do need to do *some* research,’ she is recognizing that the value added by the academically trained writer is that he or she is likely to offer a high degree of familiarity with the topic at hand *and* be able to ‘enter an ongoing conversation.’

In our view, these are skills that comprise a writing frame of mind from which citizen readers of all cast and character will always derive benefit. Academics are by nature thoughtful people. While they do not, of course, have any kind of patent on truth, they do tend to seek it in empirical and evidentiary ways. And although academics are not free of bias, because no one can be, most are ruminative and have been programmed—formally, institutionally trained and programmed—to achieve critical distance. This characterization may be stereotypical, but, as is often the case with stereotype, it derives its basis from

observed generalities. Academics, in other words, are always seeking *other words*. They are seeking better words, words that come closest to the truth as they see it. This is (arguably, perhaps) especially true of those of us who are literary scholars. We spare little effort in the drafting, revising, editing, proofing, and re-editing of most of what we write. This constant practice of phrasal refinement eventually becomes second nature. Will the public on every day of the week, and in every mood and temper, always have a reading appetite for such refinement of language? No, no more than any of us are *always* of an appetite for wholesome foods. Still, most diners are glad for those items on any menu that they know will do them good. Similarly, most readers will usually be glad that there are writers in our world who have a penchant for quality and who want to elevate as well as please. When academics write for general readers, they—we—bring something of value to society that not everyone can bring. Turgid prose may be our occupational hazard, but when we make it a priority to approach our work sensibly, we can and often do make a very good impression.

Notes

¹ Stephen Pinker, 'Why Academics Stink at Writing,' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 26, 2014, 6.

² *Ibid.*, 10.

³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴ Ken Hyland quoted in John W. East, 'The Scholarly Book Review in the Humanities: An Academic Cinderella?,' *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 43, no. 1 (2011): 58.

⁵ Sue Norton, 'The Regulating Daughter in John Updike's *Rabbit* Novels,' *John Updike Review* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 25.

⁶ Sue Norton, 'Wavelengths,' *Moods Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2016, 26.

⁷ Jan Blommaert and Malgorzata Szabla, ‘Does Context Really Collapse in Social Media Interaction?’ (plenary conference talk, *Moving Texts: Mediations and Transculturations*, Aveiro, Portugal, December 7, 2017), https://www.academia.edu/33790342/WP217_Blommaert_and_Szabla_2017._Does_context_really_collapse_in_social_media_interaction.

⁸ Jessica Vitak, ‘The Impact of Context Collapse and Privacy on Social Network Site Disclosures,’ *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 56, no. 4 (2012): 451.

⁹ Laurence W. Mazzeno, ‘Gaining Presidential Support for Alcohol & Other Drug Abuse Prevention Initiatives,’ *Prevention File* 19, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 6–10; Laurence W. Mazzeno, ‘Gaining Your President’s Support for IT Initiatives at Small Colleges,’ *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2004): 49–50; Laurence W. Mazzeno, ‘Technology: Expense or Investment?,’ in *Connections: Presidential Views on New Technology*, ed. Mary Louise Fennell and Scott D. Miller, (Wayne, PA: SCT/Sungard Publications, 2005), 1–4, reprinted in *Campus Technology* 18, no. 10 (June 2005): 62–65; Laurence W. Mazzeno, ‘Providing Adult Students Access and Choice,’ *Education in Pennsylvania* 3 (Spring 2005): 34–47.

¹⁰ Alexander Pope, ‘Essay on Criticism,’ *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New York: Routledge, 1996), line 298.

¹¹ Ezra Pound, *Make It New: Essays* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1935).

¹² Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869), viii.

¹³ Quoted in Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir, by His Son*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1987), 196.

¹⁴ Laurence W. Mazzeno, “Ulysses.” *Alfred Tennyson: A Literary Companion* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, forthcoming 2019).

¹⁵ Samuel Johnson quoted in James Boswell, *The Life of Johnson, Including Their Tour of the Hebrides*, ed. John Croker (London: John Murray, 1876), 550.

¹⁶ Robert Hauptman, 'Authorial Ethics: When Writers Abuse Their Calling,' *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 39, no. 4 (July 2008): 323–53. Hauptman later expanded his essay into a book with the same title, *Authorial Ethics: How Writers Abuse Their Calling* (Lanham, MA: Rowan and Littlefield, 2011).

¹⁷ Paul Dicken, 'You Want to Write for a Popular Audience? Really?,' *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 9, 2015, 4.

¹⁸ Anne Trubek, '5 Lessons on Writing for the Public,' *ChronicleVitae* (blog), August 21, 2015, <https://chroniclevitae.com/news/1105-5-lessons-on-writing-for-the-public>.