

A Note from the Editors

By Denise Bates, Jenna Chalfonte, Melissa Fitzgerald, and Molly Kauper

As we read and discussed the pieces for this latest issue of NU Writing, we began to think of the many valences of the term “disruption.” Disruption calls to mind the idea of disasters—small and large—obstacles and challenges—personal and societal—unforeseen interruptions. Disruptions happen to us, and they happen around us. They affect the spatial and the temporal; we are thrust by them into unknown waters, off the map, behind schedule. And yet, we as humans can also *be* disruptive. We may think of disruptions as involuntary, but disruptions might also be tactical—acts of resistance to the status quo, of calling attention, of defining the self, of questioning.

And so it is with the pieces that make up this issue of NU Writing, which, exhibit some of the diverse range of writing genres being undertaken in the Writing Program: disciplinary literature reviews, literacy narratives, satire, qualitative research. The range of genres represented here presents its own kind of disruption to the staid, formal academic essay. The pieces themselves explore disruptions at multiple scales and from different points of view, from the intensely personal to the widely political. They offer us many lenses through which we might identify, address, and engage disruptions.

“English and Me” deals with the way that language can create a personal, social, and cultural barrier. The author’s own struggle to overcome the challenge of learning a new language caused a constant disruption in her daily life and in her communication. Her story reminds us how far-reaching disruptions can be: when communication, centered at the core of human interaction, is disrupted, there are not many elements of life that can escape the effects of this obstacle. And yet, it also gives us hope in the fact that disruptions are temporary: after years of persistence, she was able to break through the linguistic and cultural barriers that held her back.

“Metalheads,” our second piece, deals more subtly with disruptions, and experiments with the many meanings of the word. This piece educates readers on the world of metal music, a genre that is frequently stereotyped and stigmatized. While many people might see metal music itself as literally disruptive, this essay reverses that prejudice as it gives an uncommon perspective on the appeal and culture of this music style—in fact, one might say that this piece disrupts the typical attitude toward metal music, causing the reader to reevaluate their own thoughts and opinions.

By contrast, the next two pieces both deal with disruptions to health. The first, “Biomarkers of Major Depressive Disorder and Applications to Diagnosis and Treatment,” deals with a disease that disrupts a person’s everyday life, impairing their cognitive and social functions. The author provides a lucid review of current research into MDD. This piece is coupled with another that takes up a depressive disorder. “Postpartum Depression Prevention and Screening: The Role of OB/GYN’s and Pediatricians in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Postpartum Depression” sheds light on an important topic that affects—indeed, disrupts—the lives of many women after childbirth. Again, the author overviews best practices for diagnosis and treatment, not just for OB/GYN’s, but also for Pediatricians.

Our final piece, “Smokey the Bear” traces the history and present of the potent fire-prevention symbol, Smokey the Bear. Created as a symbol to disrupt the negative impact of humans on forested environments, Kameron Mori notes how Smokey has lately been revived as a symbol of political disruption and resistance. “Smokey the Bear” is a web text, originally composed in Storify, a platform for composing image and social-media rich texts. Storify is set to be shut down in May of 2018—a potential disruption to the circulation of this form of digital writing.