

Writing as Activism: Motivating Social and Political Shifts

Ninth Annual Brooklyn College Graduate English Conference

Friday, May 6, 2016

This year's conference seeks to establish a link between the act of writing and activism by focusing on the strategies writers use to bring attention to their social and political aims. Writing has been used to inform the public, criticize societal norms, and capture lived experiences. Writing has also been used to respond to rhetoric that justifies bigotry or reinforces socially constructed norms. As new questions arise about freedom, identity, religion, and related matters, many writers feel compelled not only to capture the social and political issues of their time, but also to use writing to change notions about the world we live in. In the words of James Baldwin, "You write in order to change the world...if you alter, even by a millimeter, the way people look at reality, then you can change it." Writing in response to social and political injustices is a tradition writers have followed throughout history. As a result, these writers have become activists through the use of their pens.

We invite a discussion of the strategies writers use to elicit social change or to advance their political views. This call is open to scholars working in any time period, genre, and theoretical approach. Potential topics related to the "Writing as Activism" include but are not limited to:

- Satire: Humor and Critique
- Ethos and Women's Rhetoric
- Propaganda: The Rhetoric of Fear
- Call and Response: Discrediting Dogma
- Deconstructing Identity: Race, Gender, or Sexuality
- Journalistic Integrity: The Use of the Whistle Blower
- Religion: Pointing Out Hypocrisy
- Listen to the Children: The Child Messenger
- Social Media and the Power of Civic Surveillance
- Poetry and the use of the Metaphor
- Telling Our Own Stories: Race and the Ethnic Author
- Everyone is a Writer: The Blogger and the Tweeter

Abstracts of no more than 300 words may be submitted to bcgradconference@gmail.com by March 10, 2016.