

**Verso: A Journal of Undergraduate Literary Criticism ©2009**

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Special thanks to:

Alice Brittan

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Trevor Ross

Anthony Stewart

The publication of this journal would not have been possible without the support of the Dalhousie University Department of English and the Dalhousie Arts and Social Sciences Society.

Verso: A Journal of Undergraduate Literary Criticism is published annually (starting now) by the Dalhousie English Society Dalhousie University; Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Layout and Cover art: Zani Showler

Strike that, reverse it.  
-Willy Wonka



\*Almost all are about 19th-21st C. Anglo Americans ... and all about works written by men... Awkward!  
 what does this even mean?

our errors and failures to be productive rather than consequential?

With this in mind, I think that we should start thinking about how our work can be excellent on its own terms. Rather than pretending to be knowledgeable, experienced, and accredited (what at?), we have the freedom to engage in reading and writing that fails to be these things; we can, and should, be producing work that is experimental and imaginative, playful and audacious. And, in the spirit of taking our lack of seriousness seriously, we ought to be taking this work out of a vacuum and sharing it with one another.

(Don't mention that only one paper is not by a King's student.)

The seven essays\* that we have collected in this inaugural publication of *Verso* represent this breed of excellent undergraduate academia from students in Dalhousie University's English programs.

Kind of an odd choice of word, but fine

We are sharing these papers with you not only because they are well-written and well-argued (which they are), but also, and even more so, because they are smart and playful, because they take risks with difficult and discursive subjects; <sup>and</sup> because they approach ~~these~~ <sup>from</sup> ~~subject~~ with a different or unique or unexpected angle.

How many times have I used this word?

(italics)

The name Verso is meant to speak to this idea of failure—of the possibility for it to be an active, engaged, important activity or stance. It is about coming at something from a different direction—perhaps even the wrong one—and finding value in that misdirection. Visually, I wanted this book to look like a mistake. Something a little bit confusing, conflating the beginning and the end, the points of opening and closure.

active activity? Right.

(How was I planning to end this again?)

Zani Showler  
 Zani Showler  
 Editor-in-Chief

(more personal!)

## CONTRIBUTORS

**EVAN BROWN** is a 4<sup>th</sup> year student completing a Combined Honours degree in Early Modern Studies and English. This paper was written for Dr. Bruce Greenfield's class *Moby Dick in Context*.

**ALYSSA MACKENZIE** is a King's student completing an Honours degree in English. This paper was written for Joel Baetz's class *Poetry of the Earlier Twentieth Century*.

**CAITLIN McCONKEY-PIRIE** is graduating with a Combined Honours degree in English and Contemporary Studies. She wrote this paper for Dr. Anthony Stewart's seminar on Ralph Ellison and Percival Everett.

**ADAM MILLER** is, by his own admission, an unabashed romantic, and that comes with some stigma in contemporary culture. He is another one of those dilettantes, an English Honours student, and he spends his spare time in private shame... or, rather, reading – namely Cormac McCarthy.

**PETER SALTSMAN** is in his final year of a Combined Honours degree in English and Contemporary Studies. In his first year, someone once referred to him as “the Jack Kerouac of literary criticism.” He has spent the subsequent three years trying to figure out what that meant and whether or not it was an insult.

**ANDY VERBOOM** is graduating this year with his Honours BA in English. He is academically and creatively interested in world and post-colonial literatures, contemporary poetry, gender studies, trauma, and memory. Next year, he'll be pursuing these interests at the graduate level at the University of Alberta.

**ADRIA YOUNG** will be graduating with an Honours BA in English and History next year. She is an eighteenth century enthusiast of the highest degree.