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## From the Editors

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## From the Editors

*Albert C. DeCiccio and Joan Mullin*

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We hope to end the millennium by the kind of reflection that promotes controversy. As directors of writing centers, we construct a service that we assume will fit the needs of our community. As tutors, we construct a student as she sits before us, hoping to meet her needs as we interact with her. This issue of *The Writing Center Journal* speaks of constructions: of our students, of our tutors, and of the writing center as a whole. Each author in this issue uses a visual that is packed with cultural connotations, and one must wonder at the embedded angst that lies behind the use of their metaphors: horse trainers, little teachers, censors, and prostitutes. Each metaphoric “person” serves others; each practices publicly; each operates within a focused sphere of influence; each is in a position to demand or command; each is in a largely unrecognized or powerless social position.

These demonstrate the continual struggle of writing center practitioners as they attempt to reconcile their service positions and the authority granted them by students, the tension inherent in maintaining a writing center’s private sphere in order to allocate limited resources and risking expansion in and exposure to the larger community. We also want to claim our right as a scholarly discipline, one that has been in the forefront of defining scholarship as practice. Yet, while we want this and other benefits of academe—competitive salaries, tenure (or security of position), budgets, space—we often claim to be the renegades, the subversives, the ones refusing to become like our colleagues in the classroom or our administrators in their offices. And so our metaphors continue to reflect the tensions inherent in our own most recent growth spurt.

Where does that leave us now, on the edge of a millennium? What these authors seem to indicate is that we are still on the cutting edge of reflective practices—and, as a result, beginning to resolve those enduring conflicts that have plagued us—by admitting that we are both and neither: we are teacher/learner, server/authoritarian, censor/free-speech advocate, perhaps a Cressida/Pandarus.

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Even our book reviews, both focusing on language and cultural assumptions but from different perspectives, cause us to reflect on our intentions and our practices, make us look again at our perceptions of ourselves and the perceptions others may have of us. We ask that you continue to send in research that addresses these and other issues pertinent to our changing conditions, and that you choose to respond via letters to the ideas in *The Writing Center Journal*.