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Commentary on "The Forgotten Genre in the United States Declaration of Independence"

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In a paper as well-written as it is innovative, Jingwei Mao's "The Forgotten Genre in the United States Declaration of Independence" offers readers a new way of understanding the well-known pronouncement by pointing to a more obscure historical document, the Dutch Plakkaat. Written for her Writing 101—which was centered around Jefferson's famous document—Jingwei found herself inspired by current tensions between China and the United States, tensions which she says revealed an “oath breaking process.” Applying this modern lens to the assigned topic of the Declaration of Independence, she found that both the Declaration and American history have a quality that she found to be emblematic of the Plakkaat, oath breaking. It's clear in her writing that Jingwei understands both the Declaration and Plakkaat well, as she weaves the two's similarities together seamlessly in prose that is eloquent and informative. While the focus of the essay is almost exclusively textual, there is a poignancy pulsing through it that emerges at the paper's conclusion when Jingwei highlights a few broken treaties that are relevant today. By using examples of the US government's many broken oaths to Indigenous Nations as well as President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, Jingwei masterfully shows the importance of her argument, demonstrating that the parallels between these old texts remain relevant and valuable today.

-Sam Fujikawa, *Writing Center Consultant*