

# Editorial

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## **Abstract**

This editorial piece marks the completion of our role as the Student Journal Editor for the Essex Student Journal. To commemorate this, we have written an account of my time in this editorial, exploring both the positives and challenges that have arisen.

**Keywords:** Essex Student Journal, Student Journal Editor, Scholarly Publishing, Open Access

## **Article**

We are delighted to welcome you to the first issue of the fifth volume of ESTRO and are proud to continue the multidisciplinary profile of the journal in this anniversary year. As always, ESTRO strives for academic excellence as well as variety, aiming to be more than just a drop-box for Essex research. ESTRO is here to strengthen the academic community by being a resource by and for all students. The articles for this issue were written by authors coming from five different departments, studying at different levels at the University of Essex. They represent an engaging, Essex-flavoured mix of theory and practice, language and analysis. We are confident that each article is interesting, enlightening or even inspiring to people within *and* beyond their subject areas.

We start with an article from Luke Whittington, James Dooley, and Martin Henson, presenting current research done on intelligent environments, where the University of Essex pioneers new approaches to scaling up artificial intelligence to enhance and transform our everyday environments. Continuing with a radically different kind of transformation, Frazer Merritt guides us through the psychological journeys of two characters in *The Odyssey*. The last three articles of this issue represent a thorough introduction to important academic work being undertaken across our University, from statistical analysis to conducting experiments and testing theories. Emma Willis investigates the difference between two variants of aphasia, a class of language disorders, based on experiments found in critical literature. Using statistical regression, Gediminas Blazys

investigates the relationship between military funding and the level of democracy in countries. The final article of this issue is a lab report by Michael Caley, examining the influence of contextual anchors on undergraduates' financial judgement.

This issue of ESTRO opens with an article that presents fascinating research that is being conducted at the University of Essex right now. Luke Whittington, James Dooley, and Martin Henson introduce us to projects in artificial intelligence and intelligent environments, promising a world of enhanced experience that does not seem far removed from science fiction. In 'Our Future World(s)', the reader is introduced to Intelligent Environments: an area of research aimed at the augmentation of people's lives and experiences. This is done by virtue of artificial intelligence embedded in classrooms, offices and homes, designed to make life easier. Within the field there are still some issues to be resolved, and the University of Essex is doing pioneering work by coordinating research into Intelligent Environments and driving it forward. The article is an excellent example of how technological change is slowly but surely transforming our way of life – concepts that seemed fantastical in the past now seem reasonable and even achievable.

In line with Whittington, Dooley, and Henson's essay, Frazer Merritt's article, titled 'Initiation into Adulthood and Old Age: The Journeys of Telemachus and Odysseus' discusses a transformation taking place. Instead of looking at the changes that are being made to our environment however, he pictures the psychological journey of two characters of Homer's classical tale *The Odyssey*. On the one hand, Telemachus, in the absence of his father, must proceed from adolescence to adulthood, taking up his responsibilities and identifying with the archetypal warrior. Odysseus, on the other hand, having fought in the Trojan War for ten years, which is symbolic of the goals and ambitions of the middle age of a man's life, needs to acknowledge that he is passing into old age by overcoming the temptations of the Sirens and goddesses on his way home. Merritt's psychoanalytic interpretation of a particular theme present in this age-old story offers a fresh perspective on what is involved in the transformation of the masculine subject throughout his life.

Passing from literature to language, Emma Willis's 'An assessment of the differences in linguistic nature of patients with Broca's and Wernicke's aphasia' is an essay that involves a very different aspect of academic research: conducting and interpreting research. Discussing the long road of medical and psychological research and experiments concerning aphasia, a class of language disorders usually associated with brain damage, this essay meticulously characterises and categorises

the symptoms involved in two variants of aphasia. While at first glance they seem similar, this essay concludes that Broca's and Wernicke's variants of aphasia have distinct and explainable differences in their linguistic symptoms.

Related in comparative approach but not methods, Gediminas Blazys's essay titled 'On the Road to Democracy with Sticks and Carrots. The Relationship between Military Funding and Democratization' looks at two competing theories of budget allocation. Specifically, this essay considers the link between military funding and democratization, as well as the mechanisms underlying this effect. Should countries aiming to democratize increase military funding in order to appease, or decrease funding to limit military power? Gediminas's essay is a compelling read, combining statistical regression analysis with the two existing theories in order to compare the empirical evidence in favour of both theories.

Finally, we have a lab report from Michael Caley bridging finance and psychology, 'Estimating Future Starting Salaries: Do Anchors influence the Range of Values Which seem Plausible?' This report analyses three different ways in which numerical anchors might nudge people into giving biased estimates of starting salary. Using statistical regression analysis and data gathered from his own experiments, Michael's findings not only chime with the relevant literature of the field, but also provide new insights into the ways people are influenced towards higher or lower estimates.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this issue as much as we enjoyed editing and compiling it. We also want to encourage all students at the university to submit their best work to us. ESTRO is a student-run journal, and we rely entirely on students who are interested in publishing or reviewing for ESTRO. As such we would like to thank everybody who contributed to the journal, especially the authors and reviewers, for their hard work and dedication.

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