

# 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 pleased to welcome you to the second edition of ESTRO for this academic year. In recognition of the multi-disciplinary nature of the journal, we would like to share the connections we have made between articles in this issue. Each article in some way explores the theme of morality, either of the individual or of a society, and how the views of the collective and the individual can change dominant societal perceptions. For your reading pleasure, this issue includes an interesting mix of articles from across the four faculties.

A question to consider when reading the articles is, to what extent does the individual have a responsibility to uphold moral principles and consider others, either locally or globally, whilst asserting themselves in the quest for personal and career-orientated success? The articles contained in this issue reflect how morality can be found in many aspects of academic writing about life, global economic systems and the individual's consideration of art and literature. The first three articles, from Maximilien Von Berg, Marko Grudev and David A. Church, show awareness of the desire for capitalist success, versus the moral obligation of individuals, countries and companies to the global society. Lucy Cook's article examines morality within a literary context, looking at societal issues of race, gender and class in the writing of William Faulkner. The next two articles, from Antoinette Hewitt and Virginia Cain, examine the work of individuals who observe the world around them; Hewitt and Cain consider how individuals can challenge the dominant and often

traditional views of society, in order to form modern creative perspectives. The next article, from Ellyn Coe, relates to Cain's, as both consider ways in which beauty can be realised through our subjective views. The next article, from Katie Groves, considers how individuals relate to others in an emotional capacity. The final article is Ralph Barker's exploration of the impact an individual can have on cultural movements and is a passionate expression of the author's personal feelings on how art should be interpreted.

The first article is written by Maximilien Von Berg and titled "Why is it often said that natural resources are a curse?" Von Berg explores the political and economic implications for countries rich in natural resources. He assesses the correlation between countries that are resource-rich, but also poor and undemocratic, asserting that natural resources can have a positive or negative impact on society. As part of his analysis, Von Berg challenges the Resource Curse Theory, and considers political and economic ramifications on the people of a country rich in natural resources.

Following Von Berg's article, the next explores the political and economic ramifications of another global issue. Marko Grudev's article, "Pogge and Singer: differences in their accounts of the duties of citizens in affluent societies to the global poor", also shows awareness of issues connected to the global economy. He examines the relationship between global capitalism and poverty in developing countries. Through his assessment of Pogge and Singer, Grudev questions whether developed countries are morally obliged to deal with issues of global poverty.

On a similar note, David A. Church's article, titled "Committing white-collar crime: what organisational mechanisms exist to ensure accountability? Can this profession still be relied on to regulate itself?", challenges practices underpinning capitalist financial systems, which are integral to the global economy. Church examines the relationship between the field of accountancy and white-collar crime, exploring issues such as corporate wrongdoing, ineffectual organisational structures and poor public awareness. He questions the moral obligations and responsibilities of individuals working within the profession, a number of which have been exposed committing criminal acts, for example embezzling money. He argues that it is possible for the profession to strive for greater accountability.

The subjective notions of accountability can be applied to the moral framework of a society. The dominant beliefs of society can dictate an individual's beliefs, and if these are immoral who can regulate the injustices that exist in society? Lucy Cook analyses William Faulkner's, *The Sound and*

*the Fury* in her article titled, “Born below Mason and Dixon: the role of Quentin Compson and the interaction of racial, gender and class codes of the south in William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*” and explores his engagement with the social codes of the American South and the effect on the individual. Cook focuses on the narrative of Quentin Compson, primarily in the section of the novel titled, “June Second 1910”. The author presents a stimulating assessment of issues such as incest, whilst exploring how such actions are perceived by Quentin, because of the moral codes he has grown up with in the South. It is possible to draw parallels between Compson and ourselves in that some of our actions as individuals and a society may be deemed moral according to the dominant moral code yet it does not necessarily mean that it is right. Issues of war, and prejudices based on class, race and gender are still present today and whether or not these can be changed by the individual alone is a question that Cook’s article provokes thought about.

Antoinette Hewitt’s article explores Gauguin and Van Gogh’s expression of subjective meaning as part of the symbolist movement. The article titled, “The Symbolist Movement portrayed in the art of Gauguin and Van Gogh”, draws on the techniques, materials and inspirations the artists used to create their work. Hewitt provides an analysis of each artist’s own life, considering how their experiences and the religious and spiritual narratives of the time were reflected in their work. The article gives an insightful explanation of the artwork and shows how creative minds are influenced by the world around them. This can be seen in the example of Van Gogh’s preoccupation with the scriptures at a time when the religious rhetoric influenced cultural movements. The article demonstrates how one can interpret the trends of the time and the artist feelings about these trends. If we are to look at contemporary art what conclusions could we draw about our society today?

Virginia Cain’s article reflects on how individual perceptions can change those of society despite the dominant beliefs of the time. “Beautiful Experiments: Newton’s Decomposition of Sunlight” discusses why Newton’s decomposition of sunlight with a prism experiment was considered to be beautiful by physicists. The article outlines how Newton, in doing the experiment, challenged religious views of the time using the individual perspective he had developed. Cain demonstrates why Newton decided to carry out the experiment, explores how he did so through tricks of light and observation, and explains his colourful results. The article provides a new concept of success in the scientific experiments as it defines not only how science experiments can be viewed as

something that requires objectivity but as an art form in which the scientists' subjective viewpoint makes science beautiful in its own right.

Just as individual perspectives allow for beauty to be revealed in experiments, Ellyn Coe reveals the beauty of human interaction between two people, in "Smoking Kills". In this descriptive piece of creative writing the reader can identify with the nameless characters and develop their own perceptions of them. Coe allows the reader to gain a sense of the old couple's connection through their daily rituals, despite there being no dialogue between them. Moreover, you can read into the more overt messages of the piece, for example, the irony of life. It is easy to miss the beauty in our everyday lives and Coe demonstrates how beauty is held in a person's perception as is detailed in her work.

To understand how the individual behaves in various social contexts, it is necessary to understand how the individual themselves operates. Katie Groves takes a psychological approach to the study of emotion within human beings. In her article "Empathy and judging other's pain; an fMRI study of Alexithymia.' A critical review," Groves evaluates an experimental paper on emotional states in people, specifically empathy and the condition of Alexithymia. Groves discusses the outcomes of experiments used to underpin the theoretical approach of the paper and explores how patients with Alexithymia express emotion and relate to the emotional states of others.

The final article again demonstrates the impact of an individual movement within a society. Ralph Barker's article titled, "Universalism" explores the concept of art as everything whilst experimenting with the conventional form and style of the manifesto. The piece is both a discussion and celebration of art that seeks to bring about action that disrupts the way in which we view art. It is a potentially divisive piece of writing which comments on the seven Dada manifestos in order to inspire progressive thoughts about art today. Barker rejects commercial art and enforces the importance of creation to every man; the intention is to evoke a reaction in the reader and in the tradition of artistic manifestos takes a life stance in relation to the view of art.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of the journal and finding your own connections between articles. Hopefully this issue has inspired you to gain a fresh perspective on topics both familiar and unfamiliar, question how your subjectivity is affected by the world around you and consider why you see the world the way you do. We encourage you to draw your own conclusions from the

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articles; whether you agree with each author's viewpoints or not, this issue will certainly get you thinking!

Finally we would like to thank all those who contributed to this issue, authors and reviewers in particular, who make ESTRO an exciting journal to read and assemble. We look forward to receiving new submissions so we can continue to provide you with a sample of the intellectual talent at the University of Essex.

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