

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.

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Article

We are pleased to welcome you to the first edition of ESTRO for this academic year. The multi-disciplinary nature of the journal remains prominent in this issue, as we have contributions from a number of disciplines. The articles we have chosen offer unique and engaging perspectives on a range of topics. There are also connections to be made across the six articles. Each article in some way deal with the cultural relationships people have formed in classical and modern culture. The first three articles discuss the relationship between popular culture and the arts; all three primary sources, *The Arabian Nights*, *Beowulf* and the paintings of El Greco could be considered part of the popular culture of the periods in which they emerged. They have subsequently acquired a different status through time; the articles discussing *The Arabian Nights* and *Beowulf* consider how we interact with fictional texts. Alternatively, the *Beowulf* text and El Greco's paintings can be discussed in terms of how they compare to - and can be considered adaptations of - other source texts, which highlights the relationship between literary and artistic creations. The next article examines an interview with an icon of modern popular music culture. The article draws awareness to another type of relationship, that of the television interviewer and the interviewee; a journalistic relationship we witness in the media. The final two articles focus on modern political relationships,

which are particularly fraught in nature; between the Soviet Union and The United States, and NATO and organisations sceptical of NATO's practices.

The issue opens with the insightful article, 'Surviving the Silence: *The Arabian Nights* and its Readers', by Claire Tye, which explores the lasting popularity and influence of 'The Arabian Nights' in Europe. The article focuses on how their influence has been sustained after being brought to Europe through trade during the early eighteenth century. The refusal of the tales to be silenced is related to the reader's desire to trade their own stories with the tales in order to avoid the internal fear of being silenced by death. The characters' desire to have their story told is compared to that of the reader, for example Scheherazade's battle against being silenced by her own morality is a condition to which many can relate.

In keeping with Tye's article, the next considers influence, but this time in terms of how one text influenced the conception of another. In her article, titled 'Pride and Prudentius: Beowulf and the Seven Deadly Sins', Mary O'Connor makes compelling comparisons between the plot of *Beowulf* and Prudentius' allegorical poem *Psychomachia*. The article closely examines aspects of Beowulf's character, for example his status as a heroic warrior, whilst also analysing the treatment of sins such as wrath and pride. O'Connor deepens her argument by making associations with *Psychomachia* and suggests how this might have influenced the conception of *Beowulf*. O'Connor also highlights the religious context, exploring conflicting ideals of pagan sexuality and Christian chastity.

As with the relationship between *Beowulf* and *Psychomachia*, the next article explores how early Italian paintings inspired El Greco's later representations of Saint Francis. Nadezhda Nesheva, in the article 'Sharing Divine Light: El Greco's Representations of Saint Francis', makes observations of various paintings that depict the figure of Saint Francis. Nesheva examines the differences between representations made in the 14th and 15th centuries, as part of the Italian Renaissance, and paintings composed one hundred years later in Spain by the artist El Greco. Nesheva relates differences observed in the paintings, not only in terms of technical concerns, including the use of colour and attention to light, but also by considering the religious differences between El Greco and the Italian painters.

The next article focuses on the sociolinguistic practices associated with interviews of a seemingly informal nature. 'The analysis of an interview on BBC breakfast: A comparative study with political interviews', by Yukari Yamaoka presents an attention-grabbing piece comparing an interview with

Lady Gaga to the rhetoric and interviewer/interviewee relations of a political interview. The article makes for astute reading, as it reveals what goes into preparing a seemingly uncontrived interview for morning television.

Soviet-American Cold War relations are explored in 'The impact of the Korean War on Soviet-American relations' by Anders Vage. He examines the impact of the Korean War on the bipolar world system that existed during the Cold War. The article explores the impact on the Soviet-American Cold War mentality as a result of the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and how Soviet aggression was interpreted by the USA. The argument articulates the answer to the question posed, exploring how the indirect military conflict spurred psychological reactions and heightened tension between the two superpowers locked in a zero-sum war.

On a similar topic of political relations and the establishment of institutions, Jason Naselli investigates NATO's controversial political interactions. In 'A Matter of Perspective: Why Predictions of NATO's Demise are Flawed', Naselli explores the current state of NATO, giving a thorough examination of the current scholarship surrounding existing debates on whether or not NATO is facing demise. Throughout the article the author recognises the issues facing NATO and presents a case for suggesting that, although valid and compelling, many arguments overestimate the extent of NATO's problems. Naselli's article is well organised and he presents a fresh perspective on the outcome of NATO's operations, asserting that NATO can respond to and overcome problems.

Finally we would like to thank all those who contributed to the journal, the authors and reviewers in particular, who have made this issue of ESTRO a joy to read and assemble. It has been a pleasure reading the submissions and we look forward to receiving new contributions from all disciplines, so we can continue to provide you with a sample of the intellectual talent at the University of Essex.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of ESTRO and are inspired to gain a fresh perspective on topics familiar and new to you. We hope you are intrigued by the interdisciplinary comparisons you can make between subjects that can appear disparate but share thought provoking concepts.

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