

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

Welcome to the very first issue of *Estro*, the new student journal for the University of Essex. Our aim in creating such a journal was not only to provide students with early experience of the academic publishing process, either as reviewers, authors, or both, but also to enrich the academic community at the University by celebrating and promoting student research across all disciplines. It was always our intention to publish articles which were accessible to the non-specialist reader, and so we hope that while browsing the contents of this inaugural issue, you will discover new perspectives and ideas on subjects which you never knew you were interested in, or even existed!

As a multi-disciplinary journal, we are pleased to publish a first issue which covers such a broad range of subjects. We begin with a timely analysis of the retroactive politicisation of the tragedy at Hillsborough football ground in 1989. Richard Wade's 'The Politicisation of the Hillsborough Disaster' is likely to be controversial, since the themes of political responsibility and media coverage of the event have not ceased to be loci for intense debate. However, the editors confidently maintain that Wade's challenge to the hegemonic discourse surrounding the event offers a thought provoking and sensitive analysis and we are very pleased to have been able to include Wade's work in our first

issue, not least because of the coincidence of *Estro's* launch and the 20 year anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster.

If our first article could be said to be ideal for the date of *Estro's* launch, then our second article is certainly relevant to the location of *Estro's* launch. Michael Bass' sociolinguistics research, culminating in his paper 'Street or Shtreet?', examines the transformation of speech in the Colchester area. Specifically, Michael's study analyses different pronunciations of "street" as examples of phonological variations of the (str-) consonant cluster at the beginning of spoken words. Interestingly, Michael suggests that the change he observes in Colchester palatalisation of (str-) may be due to a London influence, which may in turn be a result of counter-urbanisation and the increased mobility of the London-based workforce.

This issue also features a second linguistics paper, albeit a study based much further afield. Ariel Vazquez explores the use of different second person singular forms of address in Mexican Spanish. Vazquez's article focuses specifically on the use of *tú* and *usted* by an elderly Mexican married couple, in particular the use of these forms of address in the couple's close social relationships. The study of the use of these terms of address and their corresponding social relations reveals important elements of Mexican social deixis (the linguistic manifestation of social relationships in words expressions and gestures). Vazquez argues that these linguistic phenomena not only indicate the structure of the relationship between the addresser and the addressee, but also reveal the nature of this relationship prior to the formation of *compadrazgo* relations, a particularly close form of Mexican social relation. As an exciting gesture towards further research in the field, Vazquez also suggests that the differences in forms of address between older and younger generations may support the hypothesis that previous, asymmetrical forms of address in *compadrazgo* relations may be phased out over time, and that the symmetrical forms observed primarily in younger generations indicates an historical shift in this direction.

This Latin-American focus is echoed in Sophia Davies' 'Tanya'. Davies' poetic piece is based on her experiences whilst studying in Cuba, and is designed to capture the visual and emotional impact of the family that she stayed with. The familiarity of the author with the Cuban mother blends in a strange yet ultimately harmonious fashion with her detached reverence to effect an honest and beautiful portrayal. In particular, Sophia's work demonstrates the wealth of poetic possibility created by student's experiences while studying abroad on courses such as Latin American Studies

and we would encourage students of all disciplines to follow her example and submit their own creative writing.

Steven Kimberly's contribution to our first issue comes in the form of an intriguing historical reading of some of the cultural manifestations of vampire myths. 'A Psychological Analysis of the Vampire Myth' synthesises Freudian and Jungian analysis of vampire myths to reveal the social significance of the vampire archetype. Steven's innovation opens the possibility for applying psychoanalytic categories in a symptomatological study of cultural myths, leading to his suggestion that associating the vampire character with the id indirectly reveals implicit social norms. Interpreting the vampire myth as a product of the normative framework of a variety of societies and cultures proves to be an imaginative way for us to explain some of the qualities of vampire character, including its strong sexual presence, its nocturnality and its anti-religious element.

'Bodies of Matter' adds to the theoretical strand of the first issue with an impressive engagement with a notoriously difficult philosophical issue. Aaron Reeves surveys the work of Roy Bhaskar, Judith Butler and Bruno Latour on the issue of corporeality, bravely and successfully attempting to think through the complex ways in which we might theorise embodied subjectivity. One of the biggest problems for any theorist or philosopher attempting to understand the embodiment of subjectivity in the material world is combining the self-directed agency of the human subject with the physical presence required for agency in the material world. With Latour's concept of the 'actant', Aaron questions the traditional distinction between human agents and physical objects and suggests that some of the problems faced by Bhaskar and Butler may be solved by expanding the category of actors to include non-human entities.

Estro's aim of showcasing some of the best student work throughout the University of Essex means that a wide variety of subjects has been included in this first issue. We will continue to encourage contributions from all disciplines, including submissions from students who are based at University of Essex sites outside of Colchester. Abbey Andersen's paper, which analyses the relation between the sale price and race performance of Thoroughbred horses, comes from her work at Writtle College. We are ashamed to admit that, until receiving Abbey's paper, we were unaware that the University is partnered with a number of other Further and Higher Education institutions, including Writtle. We were however delighted to receive a number of papers concerning Animal Management and Equine Studies. Abbey's paper consists of a specific statistical analysis of the

relation between the price at which Thoroughbred yearlings are sold and the performance rating they subsequently receive at the age of three years old. The analysis achieves a highly sophisticated and detailed investigation of the relation, concluding that the relation between price and performance is less consistent than one might expect, suggesting other factors that may contribute to this inconsistency and pointing a clear direction for further research. Abbey's work reveals much about the intricacies of the Thoroughbred industry which we are confident will prove fascinating for the layperson (evidenced by this editor's interest) and thought provoking for the specialist.

Our final article concerns what will doubtless for some be a sensitive issue. Alexia Casale has produced a detailed examination of the traditional methods for identifying dyslexia, offering a convincing case for reflection on the theories and tests used specifically for identifying dyslexic students in Higher Education. Alexia's work raises a number of theoretical questions, particularly regarding our working definition of dyslexia and the practicalities of understanding the range of abilities demonstrated by dyslexic students who, by the age of eighteen, have likely learnt to somewhat mask their difficulties. Whilst Alexia's conclusion is a negative one, insofar as she argues that there is no adequate test for HE students specifically, she tells us that her research has continued into finding a preferable method. For now, 'Identifying Dyslexic Students' offers grounds for taking up research into alternative testing procedures.

In the process of setting up this journal, we have encountered a great deal of good will and enthusiasm from both staff and students, for which we are extremely grateful. An enormous 'thank you' must go to our reviewers, who have volunteered their time, often at very short notice, to read and comment on our submissions. Likewise, gratitude is due to both the authors who appear in this issue and to all who submitted pieces to the journal. We were very impressed by both the number of submissions we received and their excellent quality.

Thanks are also due to all the staff in the Learning and Teaching Unit for their help and support, in particular Richard Yates, without whom this journal would never have come into being. Our Web Developer, Luke Whittington, has also worked extremely hard to set up our website and to create the final version of the journal, for which we are very grateful. Finally, thanks must also go to the graphic designers from the Printing Centre who are responsible for our fabulous logo.

Editorial

Looking to the future, we hope to publish our second issue in early November. It is hoped that we will be able to include a letters section in subsequent publications, as well as reviews of events such as seminars and conferences, and accounts of academic experiences such as study abroad or work placements.

Finally, we hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Estro*, and will consider contributing in the future either as an author or as a reviewer.

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