

Editorial Volume 3 (1)

Introduction

It is with great pleasure that we present the fifth issue of *Exchanges: the Warwick Research Journal*. This issue forms the first part of the third volume of the journal and continues to promote exciting articles and interdisciplinary scholarship from researchers at all stages of their careers.

Every year *Exchanges* continues to grow in reputation as an open access, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary journal. This is evidenced by the large number of high-quality submissions we continue to attract. This issue includes articles from a range of disciplines, including English and Comparative Literature, History, Politics and International Relations, Art History, Women's Studies, Chemistry, and Mathematics. All of the articles published in this edition highlight the importance of breaking down traditional disciplinary boundaries. We hope that the submissions in this edition of the journal will offer productive exchanges between different academic disciplines.

Exchange, debate and dialogue

Researchers are increasingly looking for opportunities to engage with new audiences and in academic exchange outside their traditional disciplinary specialisms. This edition of the journal has interviews with two academics who have gained great distinction within their fields, whilst also devoting a huge amount of effort to transform how their subjects are perceived to 'outsiders'. They are the Winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, Professor Michael Levitt, and Professor Martin Hairer, winner of the Fields Medal for Mathematics in 2014.

Dr Gemma-Louise Davies, who is currently an early career fellow at the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Warwick, takes the opportunity to discuss the importance of interdisciplinary research with Professor Michael Levitt, whose work spans the biological sciences. He talks about his experiences of interdisciplinarity in the different countries where he has worked (USA, UK and Israel) and how sharing findings with colleagues in other disciplines has stimulated important research contributions. Professor Levitt also talks about his academic influences and role models and his plans for the future.

In our second 'Conversations' piece, early career mathematicians at the University of Warwick, Dr Martine Barons and Dr Paul Chleboun, talk to Professor Martin Hairer about how his interest in mathematics developed and ask him to describe the awards ceremony where he received the Fields

Medal in 2014. In their conversation, they discuss the overlap of physics and mathematics present in Professor Hairer's research into stochastic partial differential equations (SPDEs) and his strategies for engaging a non-specialist, sometimes even sceptical, audience. They also discuss the music software (Amadeus Pro) that he developed and continues to maintain, as well as his future plans for research.

Featured section: 'New Approaches to Performance and Theatre Studies'

This issue offers a featured section by two PhD students in the department of English and Comparative Literature Studies at Warwick—Madeleine Scherer and Emil Rybczak. Both authors offer innovative approaches to interpreting theatre and performance.

Madeleine Scherer's article 'A Troubling Double-Body: Roland Barthes' Relationship with Ancient Greek Mythology and *Bunraku*' analyses the views of the French literary theorist and philosopher Roland Barthes towards the ideal acting body. Drawing upon a corpus of Barthes' works on performance and semiotics, it comparatively discusses his views on Greek tragedy and Japanese puppet theatre (*Bunraku*). Scherer suggests that the challenges posed by the process of 'doubling' in the supposedly anonymous art of Ancient Greek masked tragedy, ultimately led Barthes to reject this form of theatre in favour of *Bunraku*, where the actor's body was replaced by life-like puppets. This reading of Barthes' theories offers new insight into his views on the acting body and points towards the significance of his works on semiotics for the future of performance studies.

Offering innovative re-readings of well-known literary texts is also the focus of Emil Rybczak's article 'Hamlet, Performance and Chaotic Cultural Networks'. Employing research methods from science and mathematics, Rybczak demonstrates how the central tenets of chaos theory can be used to reinterpret Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, from both a textual and performative perspective. Chaos theory, sometimes known as 'the butterfly effect', uses equations to predict seemingly random events, and views systems and processes holistically rather than dissecting their parts individually. Rybczak showcases the potential of chaos theory as a set of instructions for the reader to enter *Hamlet's* text and performance. Implementing science's alternative language as an idiom for cultural networks, germane to a contemporary understanding of the modern world, the article is both interdisciplinary and ambitious. For those undertaking similar interdisciplinary challenges, the author's methodology will provide ample inspiration for moving beyond cognate disciplines, showing how scientific-

based analytical techniques can be employed to reinterpret established literary works.

Gendered approaches and feminist perspectives

Reflecting on the two remaining articles published in this issue, the central theme that unites them is the importance of gendered experience. Addressing gender dynamics has been an important part of research since the second-wave feminist movement of the 1970s, which opened up important possibilities for re-examining societies and cultures, both from a historical and contemporary perspective.

Such studies have drawn attention to the need to reinterpret the gendered structures and values that underpin specific societies and institutions. This forms the basis of Ann Houghton's article on 'Myths of Male Same-Sex Love in the Art of the Italian Renaissance'. Taking particular inspiration from Michael Rocke's research into homosexuality and male culture in Renaissance Florence, Houghton explores the depiction of male same-sex erotic behaviour, specifically pederasty (male same-sex desire between a youth and older man) in Italian Renaissance art. She argues that adopting a combined approach to visual, literary and mythological sources enables us to better understand how Renaissance society 'codified' expectations of male sexual, gendered, social and cultural deportment.

The impact of Gender and Women's Studies can also be observed in recent attempts to investigate the inequalities and barriers that affect contemporary social structures and institutions. Nof Nasser Eddin's article 'Palestinian Refugees: A Gendered Perspective' advocates the need for researchers to pay more attention to the experiences of female Palestinian refugees some sixty-seven years since their expulsion from their homeland. This is achieved through a series of interviews with female Palestinian refugees living in Jordan, Turkey and Europe. Eddin underscores the importance of adopting a feminist approach to examining the unique experiences of these often marginalised groups of women and calls for policy-makers to pay more attention to their specific needs, which are very different from those of their male counterparts.

Research, politics and activism

The two critical reflection pieces published in this issue have much to tell us about the relationship between research, politics and policy-making. Continuing the theme of gender scholarship, Eleri Watson and Charlotte De Val reflect upon a conference they organised at the University of Oxford

in May 2015, which celebrated 20-years of the interdisciplinary Women's Studies programme at Oxford. Responding to and overcoming gendered and sexual discrimination is an important aspect of both teaching and research. This piece reflects upon the successes, challenges and future of Women's Studies as a discipline. One of Women's Studies great strengths, Watson and De Val argue, is that it is wholly interdisciplinary, operating across departments at Oxford University. But this does not come without its challenges. Reflecting upon some of the ideas raised by the keynote presentations at the conference, the authors consider the future of Women's Studies, and question how its practitioners can continue to develop meaningful relationships with female activist and social justice movements.

Achieving gender equality is an ongoing concern for policy-makers and higher education employers. Likewise, issues over climate change and environmental sustainability remain a crucial issue for governments and politicians. John Morgan's article reflects upon a recent conference held at the University of Warwick on the topic of 'Environmental Governmentality'. The conference aimed to discuss the theory and practice of climate governance in the period 1500–1800, and Morgan's article sets out the historical underpinnings of the subject and outlines some of the key arguments and ideas raised in each of the speaker's papers. In summarising the importance of historicising this theme—as many of the speakers argued—Morgan is also able to contextualise and put into perspective recent reincarnations of this topic, most notably on the subject of climate change. Researchers in every discipline will be able to take something from this critical reflection, whether on the importance of nuance in research, rethinking the historiography of their research topics, or in reassessing the connection between research, politics and the environment, a crucial issue in our times.

Thanks

Many thanks for your continued support of the journal through your readership and engagement with our articles. Readers play an important part in the life of the journal and we encourage you to share, comment on, enter into discussion and ask questions about our articles and critical reflections. We hope you find this issue as stimulating and thought-provoking as we have, and hope that you enjoy reading pieces outside of your research specialisms.

Finally, we want to thank all of the peer-reviewers who generously volunteered their time to read each of our submissions carefully and provided helpful, constructive feedback for our authors. We also want to

thank Yvonne Budden, Scholarly Communications Manager, University of Warwick, for her continued support and assistance with the development of the journal. Special thanks are reserved for former Senior Editor Karen Simecek, who has generously volunteered her time to this edition of the journal and offered vital support and assistance along the way.

We look forward to the next issue, which is due to be published in April 2015 and will feature an interview with political theorist and activist Professor Alex Callinicos.

The Editors

Naomi Pullin (Senior Editor) / History

Harbir Bal / Centre for Education Studies

Ersin Hussein / Classics and Ancient History

Misato Matsuoka / Politics and International Studies

Daniel Silva / Politics and International Studies

Karen Simecek / Philosophy and Literature