



Exchanges: the Warwick Research Journal

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Editorial

Editorial – Volume 2 (1)

Introduction

Welcome to the third issue of *Exchanges: the Warwick Research Journal*, an online academic publishing platform for high quality articles and shorter critical reflections, from researchers at the University of Warwick as well as researchers from the wider academic community.

We have reached an important milestone in publishing our second volume. We want to take this opportunity to reflect on some of our successes so far. The journal has published work by early career researchers alongside established academics, as well as bringing them together in our ‘Conversations with ...’ series. We have also provided development opportunities for early career researchers, not only in publishing their work but also by offering the opportunity to serve on the editorial board and gain experience of the peer review process. The journal is now listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), which represents a major development for the journal. The inclusion of the journal in the DOAJ is recognition of the quality of the journal and our peer-review process. We hope this will help us to reach a wider audience and improve the visibility of the journal to the international academic community.

The articles we have published to-date have represented a wide range of disciplines, including, film studies, religious studies, philosophy, history, mathematics, engineering, and sociology. We are excited by the enthusiasm and quality of the interdisciplinary work that has emerged through the journal. We hope that this has inspired fruitful exchanges between academic disciplines and we look forward to reading future submissions.

The Editorial Board

With each issue, we recruit a new editorial board (either current or past IAS Early Career Fellows). The current editorial board represents a wide range of disciplinary areas: engineering, sociology, philosophy and literature, and film and TV studies. We

are proud that we have an issue that reflects not only our own interests but also those of the university as a whole.

The current editorial board for *Exchanges* have valued their experience due to the insight and practical experience it has afforded them into the world of academic publishing. We have also found it highly rewarding to have the opportunity to develop such diverse and engaging articles from submission to the publishing stage. This has provided the editors with a greater appreciation of the processes involved in producing a journal.

Exchange, debate, and dialogue

Award-winning American Historian, DeWitt Clinton Professor of History, Eric Foner is considered one of the leading historians of the Civil War and Reconstruction, slavery and 19th Century America. In ‘Conversation with ... Eric Foner’, Andrew Hammond (UN impact fellow and Early Career Fellow, IAS, University of Warwick) discusses Foner’s major contributions and the concept of freedom in relation to slavery. Foner also offers wise words for early career researchers on starting out in academia and publishing.

Cultural anthropologist, Professor Bill Maurer’s work is concerned with the economy, payment systems and emerging currencies, and their legal implications, topics which are very much on contemporary concern since the Global Financial Crash. In ‘Conversation with ... Bill Maurer’, Lauren Tooker (PhD candidate, University of Warwick) discuss the origins of Maurer’s research and how his methodological approach to his research has evolved, which leads into a discussion about the economy and emerging currencies, such as Bitcoin and Dogecoin, payment infrastructure and the public good.

Crisis and Conflict

As we launch this issue, we are remembering the start of the First World War as we witness a number of conflicts around the world including Iraq, Syria, and Gaza. We are also living in a time where we have even greater awareness of potential crises such as security threats, climate change, economic instability, etc. Such issues are naturally

reflected in the focus of research around the world, which in turn is reflected in the articles published in this issue. In particular, we can see these themes as dominant in both conversations with Eric Foner and Bill Maurer.

The article by Shonola and Joy presents a case study of Nigerian universities to explore the potential security threats students face when using their mobile devices for learning purposes. The article is inherently interdisciplinary since such technologies may be used across disciplines and the security issues discussed may be affluent deterrents of uptake of such technologies. The article raises questions, that as m-learning users, we should all be concerned with how we use and protect such technologies to ensure that the security of our personal information is maintained.

Sarrouy's article focuses on the important global issue of climate change. Discussing the linkages between agriculture and climate change, and the role of women in global food systems, Sarrouy makes the case for a gendered approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Her article discusses recent policy reports showing that women have developed more sustainable approaches to food production, but that their knowledge of food systems remains marginalised in current environmental policy. The article considers both the social and environmental impact of food systems, thus applying a social science perspective (particularly sociology and gender studies) to debates shaped mostly by economic considerations. In focusing on women's knowledge of sustainable food systems, Sarrouy's article does not simply criticise enduring inequalities, but makes the case for women's active role in environmental policy.

In Dickinson's article, we explore a different approach to the theme of crisis and conflict, where she reflects on a recent conference held at Birmingham University. The conference was not merely reflecting on conflict and debates around the textual representation of violent conflict and war but using this concept as a springboard for thinking about literature and literary studies more generally in relation to inner conflict and audience responses. This nicely demonstrates the complexity of thinking about conflict and the fruitful discussion that can emerge from a taking such a multi-layered perspective.

Taking an historical look at the connection between literature and conflict, Pstrocki-Sehovic's article charts the immense social change in 19th Century France in relation to

three of the most influential novelists of the time: Flaubert, Zola and Balzac. Pstrocki-Sehovic argues that the novels of these authors acted as a form of social communication, where they not only depict different aspects of society during this period of upheaval and uncertainty but also influenced the values of French society.

Reflecting multiculturalism

In the contemporary world, we are also seeing greater worldwide mobility and multiculturalism, which is reflected in two articles in this issue.

Coleman reports on her ongoing qualitative study into the value multilingual and bilingual pre-service teachers attach to their linguistic abilities in relation to their university studies, and to their emerging identities as teachers. Coleman argues that such skills are valuable tools for learning and makes the case for looking in more detail at this aspect of a teacher's identity. Coleman's article seeks to make practical recommendations for how to foster the skills of multi-lingual teachers through university training programmes.

Benhamou discusses how the representation of protagonists of colour has changed in Disney animated films since the 1990s. Her article combines Film Studies textual analysis with theories of race and multiculturalism, a multi-stranded approach. The article also potentially has a broader appeal and significance for those interested in how race representation has shifted in US society over the decades, connecting to broader historical and cultural contexts.

From Multi-disciplinarity to Interdisciplinarity

This issue contains a number of articles that exemplify interdisciplinary approaches. We can see clearly those that have managed to successfully and fruitfully synthesise different disciplines, such as those articles by Sarrouy (mentioned above), Lewis and Smith, and Cox.

Lewis and Smith's article considers the effect of string tension variation on the tonal response of a classical guitar by using fundamental engineering principals, such as vibration theory. The article dives into the physics and scientific principles of a widely

appreciated instrument, the guitar. Their treatment of musical appreciation spans across disciplines of mathematical modelling, engineering and the phenomenology of music and the authors walk readers through an in depth scientific study of fundamental principles that produce different tonal responses. The article is a great example of how specialist scientific knowledge can be applied to everyday things, such as music; isn't that what higher education should be about?

In Cox's article, she brings together approaches from chemistry and biology in order to tackle the challenges of developing scaffolding for repairing and healing bone, a topic which itself brings together considerations in health and technology. This article brings to the fore a number of on-going challenges in developing engineering solutions to mimicking bone. Cox's approach demonstrates the value and importance of taking a multidisciplinary approach to this problem.

Focusing more broadly on the very idea of interdisciplinarity, Gaydon and Selleri reflect upon the outcomes of *21st Century Theories of Literature: Essence, Fiction and Value*, an interdisciplinary conference held at the University of Warwick (27-29), examining its achievements and the problems that it raised. Their article explores the gaps and overlaps between the distinct fields of Literary Theory and the Philosophy of Literature, considering ways in which stronger connections could be built. As such, it is an article that directly focuses upon the issue of interdisciplinarity. It examines specific obstacles that have arisen in this area and potential solutions in a manner that might have much to offer similar sites of tension in other subject areas.

Thanks

We hope you find this issue as stimulating as we have and that the connections that emerge, not just between the articles but also with your own research, will lead to exciting avenues for the future of our disciplines. Join in the discussion with our new *Disqus* function, which allows you to share your thoughts or ask questions about the individual articles.

Finally, we want to thank all of the peer reviewers who volunteered their time to read each of our submissions carefully and provide helpful, constructive comments for our authors. We also want to thank Yvonne Budden, Scholarly Communications Manager,

University of Warwick Library, for her continued support and assistance with the development of the journal.

We look forward to the next issue, which is due to be published April 2015.

The Editors

Sophie Cox / Engineering

Joseph Oldham / Film & TV Studies

Karen Simecek / Philosophy and Literature

Simone Varriale / Sociology