

## Editorial

### The Editorial Team

Studies in Arts and Humanities  
Dublin, Ireland

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We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.  
Little Gidding V, *Four Quartets*. T.S. Eliot (1943)

Academic inquiry has traditionally found one of its modes of expression through the scholarly communication process afforded by journal publications. This diffusion of thought, manifested through carefully crafted argument, adds to a grand body of historical, socio-cultural, political, philosophical and scientific investigation. After successfully surviving the trial of academic review, each and every contribution represents a new textual prism within the rich kaleidoscope of previously documented knowledge. Each paper offers up new perspectives, interpretations and conversations from the intellectual boiler house of higher education.

The motivations to engage with the complex and demanding process of critical review are many, and may include academic and career progression, as well as securing research funding. Then there is the personal satisfaction gained from communicating the findings of a research study or positing a carefully argued position. Or the pleasure in declaring something strange that you are familiar with for the purpose of offering a more thorough understanding of its real, rather than assumed, character.

Another motivator to get published is the intrinsic need for collective reflective practice, so integral to successful mediation of academic inquiry. While submitted manuscripts are more often than not of an extremely high standard, an element of editing is necessary to satisfy established academic standards. Reviewers place their professional reputations on the line when offering a critique of a submitted paper. The rewards travel in both directions. Deconstruction of a paper at a granular level stimulates personal academic reflection for author and reviewer alike. The scholarly review process may require the author to re-visit a paper several times as s/he engages with the demands of the reviewing completion process. In fact, the cycle of researching and writing for publication is a progressive activity that reinforces critical reflection in all realms of experience.

Collective reflective practice is a complex process and not without its problems. It raises important questions concerning appropriateness, scope, methods and ethics. At its heart

are some deep philosophical issues: What does it mean to learn from experience? Whose experience is of most value when applied collectively during the review process? What is really happening when the reviewer's critical reflection attempts to affect changes to the author's research output?

These are difficult questions, whose answers might be alluded to by Stephen D. Brookfield's assertion that within reflective practice are elements of "constructivist phenomenology, in the understanding that identity and experience are culturally and personally sculpted rather than existing in some kind of objectively discoverable limbo."<sup>1</sup> The dialectic of academic appraisal attempts to fundamentally inform reflective practice. The conscious decision of engaging with a journal publication such as *Studies in Arts and Humanities* (SAH) – from preparing a manuscript to engaging with the review process – requires courage and the ability to be the subject of in-depth critique. It also relies on the author's enthusiasm to faithfully render the review and learn from the experience.

As an open access (OA) project, SAH Journal aims to provide a barrier-free platform in terms of full text access, as well as minimising copyright and licensing requirements. The journal's goal is to openly share knowledge across a variety of disciplines for the benefit of researchers, educational institutions and the general interest reader. The impact of OA publications has been well researched and documented in other places. SPARC, the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition define OA as "the free, immediate, online availability of research articles, coupled with the rights to use these articles fully in the digital environment".<sup>2</sup> OA activist Peter Suber<sup>3</sup> has written extensively on the subject identifying benefits for researchers (visibility, enhanced interdisciplinary skills, accelerated pace of output), for educational institutions (increased democratisation, access and competitiveness) and for students (enhanced quality of and access to education). The open access nature of SAH Journal brings scholarly dialogue into the public sphere.

This journal emerges as the by-product of an increasing frustration with the rigid structure and limited scope of the dominant peer-reviewed academic publication tradition. As active teachers and researchers, we seek to establish a place where excellent student work may be aired, acknowledged and interrogated alongside the work of established academics. The recent proliferation of national and international undergraduate award schemes highlights a level of achievement emerging from the undergraduate space which had little previous possibility of publication. SAH Journal is an open access project and that spirit of openness extends to a willingness to engage with undergraduate, postgraduate and faculty-level submissions. The editorial board of SAH Journal places no barriers when it comes to the provenance of high quality articles for submission. Our interest is in variety, diversity and inclusion. Current discourse in third level education often includes discussion around the notion of blended learning. Modes of delivery in higher education are changing and as they change, so also are there subtle changes in content and outcome. Academic publication should reflect these changes and SAH Journal is well positioned to contribute to the reflection of these changes as an online, open access and flexible platform.

Another spark to the ignition of SAH Journal has been a desire to provide a space to highlight the importance of building and maintaining meaningful collaboration between

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Brookfield, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995), 214.

<sup>2</sup> SPARC. "Why Open Access?" Accessed May 15, 2014.

<http://www.sparc.arl.org/resources/open-access/why-oa>

<sup>3</sup> Peter Suber. "Open Access Overview (definition, Introduction)". Published 2013. Accessed May 15, 2015.

<http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>.

academic librarians and the process of publishing academic research. Librarians have long been considered important members of faculty but too often have been limited to a service-provider role. Librarians are equipped to do so much more than merely assist academic research. Their role can facilitate scholarly freedom. They can work with academic scholars to transcend disciplinary norms and accepted conventions controlling scholarly communication. SAH Journal actively involves academic librarians in the publishing process in close partnership with academic scholars.

To point out that the third level education in Ireland is currently going through a period of radical and challenging reshaping is hardly newsworthy. Not only in Ireland but across the western world, many commentators in both the academic and public spheres continue to contribute to a robust and ongoing conversation concerning the nature, function and value of higher education in society. Nowhere is this discussion more important than within the area loosely understood to encompass the Arts and Humanities sector. Those of us engaged in this business of higher education as academics or administrators (increasingly we are required to act in both capacities) need to protect the independence of our own research efforts and to ensure that newer generations of emerging scholars can find their way through the academic fog of war towards a place of appropriate publication.

This first issue of SAH Journal contains articles engaging with a wide variety of disciplines ranging from history and literature to psychology and film. Eoin McManus challenges the established myth of the French Resistance during World War Two by identifying the crucial role played by the French Communist Party (PCF) across three distinct phases of the conflict and by analysing the relationship between the communist resistance and other resistance groupings. Piotr Sadowski offers a subtle re-reading of King Lear by questioning the motivations behind Edmund's volte-face in calling off the execution of Lear and Cordelia. He argues that such an interpretation functions to maintain dramatic consistency, as well as to sustain the psychological unity of Edmund as stage villain. Laura Green offers an analysis of Elizabeth Bowen's depiction of the Anglo-Irish in *The Last September*. She contrasts Bowen's acute self-awareness of her own membership of this caste with the inability of the Anglo-Irish to properly identify and react to their declining status during the Irish War of Independence. Steven Carey questions whether anxiety and depression can be considered the same disorder. Through an analysis of evidence from behavioural, neural, and biological sources, a discussion of anxiety and depression literature and the neurobiology of anxiety and stress, he argues for a basic and natural anxiety pathology that when excessive, may result in the symptoms representative of anxiety and depressive disorders. June Butler examines the representation of women and the portrayal of femininity in a number of the films of Federico Fellini. She shows how the films chart the personal growth of female characters through their interaction with others on a journey towards increased levels of personal and social autonomy. Jonathan Victory surveys the early patterns of activity arising from the engagement of film-makers with sustainability initiatives designed to minimise the traditionally heavy environmental impact associated with film production. While identifying the challenges to be overcome in re-engineering long established working practices, he highlights the nascent role of the Eco-manager as a significant advance towards more sustainable and environmentally-friendly film production.

These articles showcase the work of emerging and established scholars in Ireland. We also welcome submissions from any and all areas of the broad constituency of Arts and Humanities on an international level. As we launch SAH Journal, we look forward to publishing creative and artistic pieces in future issues. We envision future issues where poetry, photography and fiction will sit comfortably alongside insightful academic contributions. We hope for SAH Journal to become a global multi-disciplinary place of

encounter for students and faculty, for academics and librarians, for those within the walls of the university and for those beyond.

T.S. Eliot's poem is a lyrical recognition of the inexorable quest for knowledge and the perpetual cycle of unknowing and knowing. When knowledge is encountered initially, it is mysterious. When engaged with repeatedly, it becomes possible to "know the place for the first time". The collective reflective practice offered by critical academic review presents a place of exploration, a place of re-acquaintance.

Multi-level interdisciplinary discourse helps provide the possibility of such a place. Open access publication helps provide the possibility of such a place. Digital publishing helps provide the possibility of such a place.

It is in this spirit that we launch the first issue of our journal – Studies in Arts and Humanities.

## References

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