

## **EDITORIAL**

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*Diffusion* Volume 8 Issue 1 brings together seven articles from just three main subject areas: Law, Religion, Culture & Society and English Literature, the latter also encompassing Black Atlantic Studies. But the scope of research covered in these articles reaches beyond subject boundaries and encompasses social, cultural and geographical diversity. As such, they will undoubtedly appeal to a wide readership.

The first in this issue is by Ryan Hall from Law: 'Despite an international ban in 1989, the illegal trade in elephant ivory continues. Can anything be done to prevent it?'. This study takes the reader to Kenya and China to assess the effectiveness of the Convention on Illegal Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) on the illicit trade in ivory which continues, in spite of the ban. The plight of the elephant has been much in the news of late, as elephants face extinction because they are hunted and slaughtered by man for their ivory tusks. Originally part of a Law dissertation, Ryan's analysis addresses the legal aspects of CITES, but this article will also be of general interest, not least to conservationists and all concerned for animal rights.

The next two articles are from Black Atlantic Studies in English Literature. They transport the reader to America and the Bermuda islands in the Caribbean, to examine narratives and memorials which record and commemorate the lives of a small number of victims of the slave trade. First Dyana Saad considers 'Memorialisation and repressing the memory of slavery in Bermuda'. This is very much a 'hands-on' piece of research, as Dyana travelled to Bermuda to personally examine her sources and to photograph many of the memorial sites which illustrate her article. In the second from Black Atlantic Studies, 'Fiction with friction: unreliable narratives of African American history?', Kirsty Fitzpatrick analyses African American narratives, many of which were oral accounts transcribed by white abolitionists. Kirsty questions the reliability of these texts and examines the reasons why stereotypes and inaccuracies abound. Although the slave trade is now recognised as an abomination and African American texts and memorials to slaves serve as a reminder of those who endured unbearable cruelty, these studies reveal that they represent only a partial picture, which is often distorted and unreliable.

The fourth article, by Jennifer Adamson, is from Religion, Culture and Society: 'Saint Irenaeus and conflicting doctrines of damnation'. Here the focus is on the afterlife, as interpreted in the Christian

doctrines of salvation and damnation presented by two early church fathers, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons and Saint Augustine of Hippo (in modern day Algeria). Jennifer compares the justification for Augustine's belief in eternal punishment for sinners with Irenaeus' faith in Christ's forgiveness, before considering various arguments put forward by later theologians on the nature of hell, the extent of God's love for humanity, and how this has been interpreted in respect of the afterlife.

The final three articles are from English Literature, but each overlaps into other areas of study, making all three to some extent inter-disciplinary. The first, Zaynab Kazi's 'Rumi and Sufism's philosophy of love', brings together religion, Persian love poetry and philosophy in this analysis of the verses of the thirteenth-century poet, Rumi, in terms of the Sufi philosophy of divine love. The next, Zhara Patel's "'Love Will Set You Free": *Romeo and Juliet* and Badiou', also combines the philosophy of love with literature. But here, Zahra returns the reader to Europe and Shakespeare's famous play about the young lovers from Verona in Italy, a play examined in relation to French philosopher Alain Badiou's theories on love. Finally, Jennafer Small considers the question of 'Masculinity and colonialism in Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares*', a novel set both in Scotland and in South Africa under apartheid, in which memories and imagination are woven into a narrative of violence and misogyny. Jennafer's study, whilst analysing a literary text, is equally concerned with social issues – of masculinity and the ideologies of colonialism which underpin the violence, sexual aggression and football hooliganism described in this disturbing novel.

The articles published in *Diffusion* 8:1 were all first submitted as undergraduate coursework, but each has undergone certain changes before publication. One of the required changes is in presentation, for different disciplines at the University of Central Lancashire specify slightly different presentation styles and *Diffusion* standardises this to one 'house style'. UCLan undergraduate readers, using the articles in *Diffusion* as exemplars to follow, should therefore be careful to adhere to the presentation guidelines specified in their own subject areas, rather than the style published here. Some of the articles in this issue underwent more substantial changes if the original coursework was a much longer dissertation which had to be cut or condensed to a shorter article; the specified maximum length for articles published in *Diffusion* is 5,000 words. I hope that those students who carried out this task will agree that this is a very worthwhile exercise, in that the shorter article demands a sharper focus and tighter expression which invariably results in a stronger argument.

In the editing process I am once more grateful to the First Readers, members of UCLan's academic staff, who not only recommended these articles for publication, but supervised and checked the required changes. Thanks are also due to the Second Readers / Reviewers (staff and students) for their time and critical observations and also to those members of the Editorial Team who attended Editorial meetings and provided useful feedback.

In higher education the dissemination of knowledge by publication is the goal for all researchers. Thus, in publishing undergraduate work, *Diffusion* helps to raise awareness of this significant criterion at an early stage, whilst simultaneously demonstrating the outstanding achievements of UCLan students. I hope that readers of *Diffusion* 8:1 will enjoy, learn from and find inspiration in the seven articles published in this issue.