Editorial

Carol Banks and Ryan Owen Gibson (Editors)

Diffusion 3:2 includes eight pieces of outstanding work produced by undergraduate students at the University of Central Lancashire. Again we have strong contributions from Literature, Law and History, but we are also pleased to include in 3:2 articles from four subject areas not represented in previous issues of the journal: from Languages and International Studies, Linguistics, Education and Performance.

Of the eight contributions published here, five are by final year undergraduates: Stella Hambly (Law), Bernadette Hanlon (Linguistics), Lucinda Hesketh (Music / Performance), Martin Purdy (History) and Jonathan Taylor (Languages and International Studies), one is by a second year student, Jennifer Lane (Literature / Creative Writing), and two were written by students in only the first year of study: Tricia Harris (Law) and Dominic Draper (Education). This is particularly significant, as it demonstrates that research is carried out at all stages and not simply by final year undergraduates and postgraduates. We also hope that in publishing the work of undergraduates from the first and second years of study, this will encourage all students to recognise the importance of research and the level of excellence that can be achieved even in the early years of a degree programme.

These eight articles were first recommended by various members of the academic staff in different schools and subject areas, and the wide range of disciplines covered, makes this a very diverse issue in many respects. Nonetheless, there are a number of common themes in evidence here. These include questions of identity: from Jonathan Taylor’s article on the new Japanese identity, to Lucinda Hesketh’s consideration of performance art, masochism and sexual identity, Jennifer Lane’s reworking of the fairy tale genre and its significance in terms of gender identity and Bernadette Hanlon’s analysis of a political interviewer’s ability to undermine an interviewee’s public identity. There is also an international thread interwoven, again from Taylor’s work on Japan, to Martin Purdy’s critique of tourism and tyranny in Franco’s Spain and Stella Hambly’s review of the
Suicide Act and the influence of suicide tourism, which reaches beyond our shores to the different situation within the Swiss legal system. Hambly’s concern for an individual’s right to choose the moment of death picks up on the physicality of human existence, which also lies at the heart of Hesketh’s appraisal of masochistic performance art, of Taylor’s sensitivity to the physical horrors of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, of Lane’s exposure of female vulnerability within a patriarchal set of values and of Hanlon’s focus on the power of the spoken word to cause an individual to lose face. But perhaps the most prominent thread which links these eight articles is the social awareness which they all demonstrate, an awareness prominently analysed and reappraised by our two first year contributors: in Tricia Harris’s work on trial by jury and Dominic Draper’s investigation of social class and education. All the students whose work is published here have tried, in various ways, to reach beyond established boundaries in their quests for knowledge and greater understanding of the subjects with which they engage.

But producing a journal such as *Diffusion* takes more than the authors and their work. As mentioned above, the selection process begins with members of the academic staff who recommend outstanding work to the Editorial Team. The Team itself is made up of staff, students and graduates from UCLan, and in the last twelve months it has expanded to include a greater number of students and graduates. More students are also actively involved in the editing process, as second readers in their respective subject areas. So *Diffusion* is now produced, to a greater extent, by UCLan’s own student community, showcasing some of the outstanding work produced by undergraduates and engaging increasing numbers of students and graduates in the process of editing and publishing.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and that the contents will inspire others in undergraduate research and beyond to emulate the high levels of achievement represented here.