

# Editorial

Andrew Burchell

As *Retrospectives* enters its fifth issue, its editorial team are proud to present three extremely worthy papers by young scholars.

Polly Galis, currently a PhD student at the University of Leeds, begins this volume by casting an interdisciplinary eye over the concept of memory and the relationship of individuals and groups to their collective pasts. A researcher in Francophone literary studies, Galis uses the work of the Franco-Canadian writer, Nancy Huston, to posit a model of literary memory which defies the singular directionality of chronology and instead embraces the complexities of individual biography and consciousness. Of interest to historians as much as literary scholars, her paper explores the ways in which Huston's varied and unique *oeuvre* engages with the recollection of twentieth-century trauma, war and genocide, across a variety of continents and national boundaries.

Memories of a different kind are to be found in Anastasia Schulze's article on the relationship between experts and the media at a time of rising alarm over the prescription of anti-depressants in the early 1980s. In a paper which deploys semiotic, visual analysis, alongside oral history and more traditional manuscript material, Schulze traces how audio-visual media came to use, translate and also challenge the concerns of different actors during the crisis. Her case studies of two investigative journalism programmes broadcast on ITV reveal that far from being a simplistic intermediary, the media was, in Marshall McLuhan's well-worn phrase, part of 'the message' it was attempting to convey. This approach should speak to media historians as much as to those in the history of medicine.

The last of our original-research pieces comes from Lorraine Grimes, examining the 'adoption trail' between Ireland and Britain in the early- and mid-twentieth century. Somewhat overshadowed by the more recent 'abortion trail', Grimes argues that attempts to control and curtail the movement of expectant and unmarried mothers during this period are integral to the attempts by the newly-independent government of Éire to establish a new national identity, both forward-thinking and modern but also one that was committed to the older values of the family and Church. The shameful 'secret' of the unwed Irish mother thus becomes entwined with that of the new nation.

Closing the journal, Imogen Sackey offers a review and reassessment of Alexander Lee's 2003 work on Renaissance aesthetics.

Little remains for this short editorial foreword, other than to extend heartfelt thanks to the whole of the editorial team for all of their hard work and effort in preparing the accepted manuscripts and overseeing the review processes, in addition to, of course, the army of forever anonymous peer reviewers whose advice and constructive feedback – not to mention punctuality – has been integral to our being able to publish this journal in a timely manner. We hope that the process of commenting and offering suggestions on each other's work has been a fruitful and mutually-enriching activity for all concerned. Indeed, it is the very cornerstone of effective research and of academic life.

Andrew Burchell  
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