

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF

When undergraduate, graduate, and recently graduated scholars scour calls for papers, pursuing broader audiences for their work, they are often met with the requirement that their work fit a particular theme. Themes can unite people with shared concerns, in turn connecting scholars who can collaborate on future research and reassuring individual scholars that their work is a part of a larger conversation. While theming has its benefits, some researchers find the most fitting forums for their research are unconstrained by themes.

Scientia et Humanitas conventionally forgoes theming its volumes, a choice that increases the possibility of amplifying vastly diverse concerns. This choice also allows our submitters, students and recent graduates who often have arsenals full of interesting projects that have not yet wandered far from campus, relative freedom to choose the work they submit. Volume 13 exemplifies how, when those with the power to uplift scholarly voices designate thematically-unconstrained spaces, both those voices and their audiences are benefited by a collection of impressive, timely work.

I have had the honor of spending nearly a year assembling and managing editorial staff, corresponding with submitters, copyediting the manuscript, and arranging the layout of this volume. To the scholars who offered our team twenty-nine intriguing submissions, thanks are certainly in order. While we are proud to present the twelve that we have selected for publication, we also hope that our feedback supports the works we have not selected in reaching future audiences.

This volume is roughly organized by discipline, and we start with two articles in the area of natural sciences. In “Deconstructing the Moral Animal Stigma,” Sav Buist invites other scientists to re-evaluate their frameworks for understanding non-human animals’ capacity for empathy and emotion. Next, Elizabeth Kowalczyk tests a potential treatment for a common viral infection in “Investigating the Inhibition of Herpes Simplex Virus-1 by Ginsenoside 20(S)-Rg3.”

Six articles based in the humanities come next. Kat Kolby’s “Discovering Nothing to Create Anything” demonstrates that the philosopher Gorgias’s framework of *logos* can be more fully appreciated and understood when examined in concert with game studies. Then, through close reading of Homer’s *Iliad*, Hayley Rhodes Wittenberg invites readers to acknowledge a romantic dimension of the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus in “He Whom I Loved as Dearly as My Own Life.” Additionally, in her article “Everybody you tell will be haunted too,” Harley Mercadal highlights the melding of Gothic and Modernist tropes in the work of American author Mildred Haun. Those interested in popular culture or children’s media might take interest in the next three articles. Caroline LaPlue investigates an incongruent reception of the novel and film versions of *The Princess and the Goblin* in “Seldom Like Yesterday.” I am pleased to share my own article, “*Sagwa, the Chinese*

Siamese Cat and *Dora the Explorer* Teach the Value of Non-English Language,” in which I examine language use in the premier episodes of two animated programs from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Sarah Hicks, in “Representation in *Raya and the Last Dragon*,” considers this 2021 film in the context of Disney’s complicated track-record with representing genders, sexualities, and races.

The volume ends with four articles that apply historical or social scientific lenses to highlight important people or cultural phenomena. First, in “Subversive Habits,” Sarah E. Wolfe calls for an understanding of medieval and early modern nuns as complex individuals who transcend stereotypes. Next, Lis Sodl’s “Integration and Education” uncovers ways that literature including Constance Fenimore Woolson’s “Rodman the Keeper” and W.E.B. DuBois’s *The Souls of Black Folk* exemplify shifts in American identity after the Civil War. Inspired by conversations regarding COVID-19 restrictions in the early 2020s, Carol A. Stuart revisits documented responses to an earlier pandemic in “Closures, Masks, and Quarantines.” Finally, Parvez Rahaman synthesizes his own primary research—interviews with those who encountered Mahatma Gandhi—with secondary research on Gandhi and conceptions of memory in “The Retrieving Memories of Gandhi’s Peace-mission.”

For the opportunity to facilitate the publication process for these articles, I extend thanks to several faculty mentors at Middle Tennessee State University. I first have Dr. Stephen Severn, Chair of the English Department, to thank for recommending me for the Editor in Chief position before I had even imagined myself in the role. Immense thanks are also due to Dr. Philip E. Phillips, Associate Dean of the MTSU Honors College, and Ms. Marsha Powers, retired Coordinator of Special Projects and Publications. I am grateful for the immense agency these two mentors have entrusted in me, for their time and attention when questions arose, and for the opportunity to meet and work with Ms. Powers during her final semester in the role. During the copy editing phase, Honors College Dean John R. Vile and Strategic Communication Specialist Ms. Robin E. Lee have also offered invaluable advice.

My editorial staff members also deserve abundant thanks for their close reading, thoughtful feedback, and intentional recommendations regarding which work should be featured this year. Samira Grayson, Lis Sodl, Angela Benninghoff, Kat Kolby, Parvez Rahaman, Elizabeth Polson, and Emaa Elrayah offered their own specialized knowledge and demonstrated flexibility to evaluate pieces beyond the fields that typically constitute their scholarly homes. We are grateful for Dr. Matt Elrod-Erickson, who graciously offered his support as a guest reviewer at a time when we sought expert advice in the field of genetics. I have developed as an editor by encountering my collaborators’ varied approaches to scrutinizing and supporting the work of our submitters.

Thank you all for the chance to play a role in sharing twelve insightful works of

scholarship with a broader audience. I invite you, while enjoying this volume, to celebrate and support unthemed spaces like this one, as they invite unexpected, important work.

Aubrey Keller

Editor in Chief