

Note from the Editor

When I first joined the staff of the Pittsburgh Undergraduate Review three years ago the journal had only just been revived. When it was founded in 1980, the PUR had the unique distinction of being the only national, professionally refereed journal of undergraduate research in the country but had, in the latter half of the 1990s, fallen under the radar. Since 2001, however, the PUR has been lucky to have attracted the attention of several dedicated students who made it their mission to see to it that the PUR did not recede into the shadows once again.

I am happy to say that I am one of those students. In my mind outlets such as the PUR are an absolutely vital part of intellectual development on both an individual and, I think it is safe to say, collective, level. Often the work of undergraduates gets swept under the academic carpet or is seen simply as the precursor to bigger and better things. Indeed, it often is such a precursor, but it is also so much more, a way for students who are still developing as critics and researchers to do innovative work before settling onto a beaten path. By engaging in in-depth research at an undergraduate level students are able to place themselves closer to the materials and mentors that they feel passionate about, hopefully becoming so informed about their subject matter that the question of intent need not be raised for reasons of obviousness: these students are doing this because they love to learn.

That much, I feel, is apparent in the three pieces chosen for publication this semester. Not one of these papers simply writes about a subject. Rather, all three of the writers have breathed such life into their works as to make both the Editorial Board of the PUR, as well as our professional referees, impressed with their levels of scholarship. Kerry Burchill writes from outside a culture that is not her own about a people whose culture is not necessarily all their own; Gregory Laski writes about Eavan Boland's attempt, through poetry, to redefine and humanize woman's place in Irish society; Mark Sturges discusses what Shakespeare intended his audience to come away with from his historical dramas. With that said, and with the acknowledgment that is difficult to choose between three exquisite examples of undergraduate research, I am pleased to name Mark Sturges' paper, "Chaos, Order, and Contrariety: From Richard II to Henry V," as the recipient of the 2004 Edythe Portz prize.

My deepest thanks goes to the University Honors College for the wholehearted support that they have given to the PUR in all of its endeavors. I would particularly like to thank Nate Hilberg and Dr. Alec Stewart for their unwavering encouragement, as well as Karen Billingsley and Chris Chirdon for always working out the things that were a bit beyond my abilities. Thank you also to my dedicated staff and all of the faculty referees who so generously donated what was undoubtedly precious time.

Hali Felt Editor-in-Chief