

Letter from STAAR initiator and editor-in-chief, 2008-10

Daria Luchinskaya

First, a huge thank you to everyone involved with this new issue and with previous issues of STAAR. It is wonderful to see St Anne's Academic Review go from strength to strength, and to look back at how it has progressed over the ten years (!) since its first appearance.

Back in 2008, interdisciplinarity was in the air at St Anne's. The MCR had set up informal discussion groups with invited speakers, and the College introduced Subject Family talks and dinners, to share research with College members. STAAR was founded in this context to promote the research interests and achievements of the St Anne's community, to bring together the junior and senior members of the College and to inform alumni of the exciting graduate research going on in St Anne's. STAAR also offered an opportunity for MCR members to get involved with the different stages involved in the making of a journal and to find out more about publishing. I learned a lot from my editorial board (Karen Heath, Michael Youdell, Christina Mayer, Rhianedd Jewell and Maria Amir) and from College members, to whom I remain grateful.

STAAR was originally envisaged as an online-only journal that would print research articles of around 1,500 words in length, and shorter pieces, for example, about the St Anne's discussion groups, prizes, scholarships, trips or project placements. The main aim was for all the articles to reflect the ethos of the Subject Family talks: written with an educated but non-specialist audience in mind. Our main challenge, however, was finding enough material to include, and understandably so, STAAR was a new initiative and people were busy. We persevered. After the very first issue launched on the 10th of December 2009, accompanied by drinks, vol-au-vents, and the St Anne's toy beaver mascot, it was much easier to continue with the second. Before we knew it, it was over to the next editor-in-chief, and one could say that STAAR became established at that point.

Over the years, STAAR has been evolving with every issue thanks to the dedicated editorial teams that have taken turns to direct the journal. STAAR always welcomed creativity and it's lovely to see poetry, creative writing, and now translation included throughout the issues. The new SPARK creative reviews of films, fiction, poetry and other cultural works, allow further playful engagement with the journal.

STAAR now looks much more professional than it did in 2009. The main changes that stand out are getting an ISSN in Volume 3 (2011), becoming typeset in Volume 5 (2014), and coming up with a consistent 'look' from Volume 7 (2017) onwards. I note that in Volume 8 (2018), the journal set up a peer review process, opening further avenues for becoming involved with STAAR. I am also pleased to see that the editors recently led a successful crowdfunding campaign. That's fantastic, beyond anything I could have imagined when our team started STAAR ten years ago.

I am very proud of and so impressed by all the hard work that each editorial team has put into each volume to make it their own and to get to where STAAR is today. I hope that STAAR continues to be a part of College life, and wish it, and future STAAR participants – writers, editors, readers, everyone, every success. If you've ever thought about becoming involved, give it a go! You won't be disappointed.

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