

# *Stirrings*

## *A Journal of Exploratory Research and Analysis*

When the stirrings of research emerge from curiosity and personal investment, there is always a danger that what we already believe we know will deter us from asking important questions, and that the research will be constrained by an aversion to intellectual risk. Good research demands an interest in probing for the right questions to pose. Good research questions are the true stirrings of exploratory research and analysis. But the stirrings of good research questions are less obvious and often more difficult to tap into.

This is where a good research mentor comes in handy, as well as established research practices that model the cultivation of those questions that proved most fruitful in arriving at productive research outcomes. The articles published here reflect attempts to grapple with research problems of special interest to the students conducting the studies. They have been encouraged to work initially from a position of personal interest and investment, and then to push beyond this to discover issues and questions to reshape the initial scope of their focus. The stirrings of personal interest are a crucial element in the cultivation of sound research practices, but they should not be confused with the stirrings of sound research. The stirrings of sound research emerge from a growth in perspective.

In the process of acquiring perspective in life, we cultivate attunements, attitudes and convictions. But do we always recognize how these orientations sensitize or desensitize us to the blind spots in our understanding? Are there not issues, concerns, opportunities and challenges relevant to our lives that we can only appreciate *from somewhere else*? As we grow older in life, we clearly discover points of entry to our surrounding world, but only by closing off or eclipsing *other* points of entry.

To see the world in a new light, to acquire

new *entries* to the world, is to become responsive in a new way. The capacity to respond to issues and concerns otherwise masked from view demands a special openness and attention to what we find strange and challenging. We seldom see the world in a new light without first having the curiosity and willingness to explore unexpected or marginalized phenomena; nor without learning to discern otherwise hidden facets of our filtered social and personal constructions.

The call to see the world in a new light -- to "open the universe a little more," as Salman Rushdie has urged in *Imaginary Homelands* -- calls for critical voices, exploratory minds and the empowerment of creative forms of expression carefully interwoven with sensitive analysis and personal concern. It calls for attending to complexities in life that are all-too-often eclipsed from view by more dominant ways of thinking, feeling and speaking. Above all, it calls for *an attentive ear*, the first condition for generating an attentive *response*.

We trust this collection of articles will not only stir your interest in timely topics but that it will also offer some insights into how one might come to grips with a deeper level of what is at stake once the research process gets off the ground. The goal of these writings is to integrate an awareness of what is at stake into the formation of sound research questions and to present findings based on an analysis of criticism and exploratory questions, and to suggest how these findings might influence further developments in the research. These are not finished products. They represent only the stirrings of research. But as such, they reflect significant efforts to raise curiosity to the level of sound research with respect to topics and issues that should spark interest in the minds of our readers. We hope they do so!

## *HONORS PROGRAM COMMUNITY STATEMENT*

The Honors Program at CSU Stanislaus is a community of scholars bound together by vital principles of academic openness, integrity, and respect. Through focused study and practice involving exploration and discovery across a variety of disciplines, the Honors Program upholds these principles of scholarly engagement and provides students with the necessary foundations for further research and inquiry.

Our interdisciplinary curriculum is integral to this work, and is intended to facilitate creative understanding of the irreducible complexities of contemporary life and knowledge. Personal and intellectual honesty and curiosity are essential to this process. So, too, is critical openness to difficult topics and respect for different perspectives, values and disciplines. The Honors Program aims to uphold these virtues in practice, in principle, and in community with one another.

*Honors Program Advisory Committee*

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