

## **Editor's Column: An Issue Devoted to Dialogue**

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Science is not only about building models, conducting experiments, collecting data, and testing theories. A very important part of science is a continuing dialogue, not only among scientists themselves, but also involving the general public. Transdisciplinary research areas, such as Cliodynamics, are in particular need of vigorous discussion because researchers with backgrounds in different disciplines use very different theoretical and methodological approaches, and because the same term can mean very different things to, say, an economist and a biologist. What the models are saying and what empirical results mean is often controversial and needs to be argued over. As the Russian proverb goes, the truth is born in argument.

Whereas the previous issue focused on the 'hard' aspects of Cliodynamics, publishing papers on formal mathematical models and databases designed to test model predictions empirically, the current issue is devoted primarily to dialogue. A dialogue can take many forms. Thus, we continue publishing discussion articles under the *Social Evolution Forum* rubric, a constant feature of the journal since 2011.

In this issue we introduce a new journal section, *Forum*, in which the lead article focuses on a controversial issue, followed by critique, and a rebuttal. In this case, the lead article is by Ricardo Duchesne. The article was prompted by a review of Duchesne's book in the previous issue, but it moves beyond both the review and the book itself. The discussion of Duchesne's controversial thesis raises a variety of issues, not only factual and methodological, but, more broadly, potential tensions arising when science meets ideology.

As always, *Cliodynamics* continues the publication of research articles. This issue features an investigation by William Thompson and Kentaro Sakuwa on the deep historical roots of modern economic growth. Book reviews (themselves a form of dialogue) also continue to be a very important part of the journal.

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