

## Editor's Note

.....

### Special Issue: Black Popular Culture in America

.....

Greetings, readers! I'm so thrilled to share this Special Issue with you! It is the hope of all of us who work on *Popular Culture Review* that the journal can be a leader in diverse scholarship considering all areas of popular culture. This issue, focused on Black popular culture in America, comes at a time when racism has taken an appalling center stage. The scholarship here presents the work of a number of Black scholars and demonstrates the diversity of scholarship around Black popular culture.

Our first article, "Blackening the Frame: Kerry James Marshall's *Rythm Mastr*" by Austin Anderson, explores how the *Rythm Mastr* comic book series challenges Western historiography. He further considers how the series has been a call to action for a "Black popular culture insurgency."

Justin Martin considers the importance of Luke Cage in "Harlem's Superhero: Social Interaction, Heterogeneity of Thought, and the Superhero Mission in Marvel's *Luke Cage*." Martin's article focuses especially on the recent television series, but also on Cage's larger comic book history and legacy.

"The Discourse of Memes: Regressive Politics and Internet Culture" by Shahbaz Khayambashi provides a powerful analysis of meme culture and its role in perpetuating racism and far right-wing ideology. Khayambashi also considers how the left utilizes memes, including the different types of memes centered on the Black Lives Matter movement.

Julia Mollentheil’s “Candyman and the Afterlives of Slavery” considers both the original 1992 film and the 2021 sequel. Mollentheil posits that the films explore Black trauma in significant ways, and that the character Candyman “sits at the intersection of the afterlives of slavery and the supernatural.”

Our final article, “‘I Had a Weird Dream’: *Atlanta* and Afro-Surrealism as Alternative Narrativization” by Emily Scroggins, analyzes the television series *Atlanta* as a storytelling outlet that upholds, and speaks to, marginalized people. Scroggins also provides a powerful and considered analysis of Afro-Surrealism, both in general and how it relates to *Atlanta*.

We feature two book reviews in this issue: *For the Culture: Hip-Hop and the Fight for Social Justice*, edited by Lakeyta Bonnette-Bailey and Adolphus Belk and reviewed by Lavar Pope, and *Straight Shooter: A Memoir of Second Chances and First Takes* by Stephen A. Smith, reviewed by Louie Galvan. These selections represent the journal’s goal in bringing you reviews of different types of books related to popular culture. The first review is of an academic book, while the second is a memoir. We’ll continue to feature book reviews that consider popular culture from a variety of angles.

Finally, this issue introduces a new feature that you will see from time to time going forward! Our publisher, Westphalia Press, strongly advocates for the role that academic journals like *Popular Culture Review* can play in serving as an archive for historical information. To that end, we are publishing a brief piece with archival information and links about cookbooks. Cooking and cookbooks are certainly a part of popular culture study, so I hope you will enjoy looking through these resources.

Thanks, as always, for reading!  
Amy M. Green, Editor-in-Chief