

## Editor's Note

.....

Our first issue of 2023 features varied perspectives on popular culture both in America and internationally.

First, I want to recognize Dr. Heather Humann, who is the 2023 recipient of the Felicia Campbell Innovative Contributions to Popular Culture Studies Award. She has written numerous books and articles across an array of popular culture topics, including detective fiction, reality simulation, and the depiction of domestic violence in fiction. I had the opportunity to interview Dr. Humann about her work. In addition, she has contributed a compelling article about narration in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel *Klara and the Sun*. I am certain that she will continue to be a strong voice in popular culture studies.

Ashley McCann and Erika Engstrom consider the male gaze in *Blade Runner 2049*, especially as it centers on the character Joi. They argue that although the film appears at first to be progressive with regards to how it depicts its female characters, the truth is more regressive.

Seth Vannatta writes about the intersection of epistemology and metaphysics in the novel *The Giver* and the film *Pleasantville*. Vannatta's insightful and in-depth analysis of both the novel and the film ask readers to consider their philosophical underpinnings in new ways.

Felicia Cosey argues that there is significant work that remains to be done in both the Hollywood and British film industries with regards to representation and racism. Her article does not shy away from the complexities of this issue.

Nurudeen Adeshina Lawal and Rabiyya Iyanda provide a Nigerian perspective on COVID-19 and how social media posts, especially on Facebook, were utilized by Nigerian citizens to critique the government's response to the pandemic. They further argue that social media posts like this serve as important documentation of an event like the pandemic.

Finally, Kaitlin Thomas also considers social media posts, specifically memes of the characters Pepe the Frog and Kermit as they were utilized in debates about immigration and immigration policy. Thomas also considers how hashtags and emojis of frogs furthered the debate and identified posters' political views.

This issue features two book reviews. The first is a review of *Forms of Defiance* by Karyn Stacey Panem. The second is a review of *Latinx Teens – U.S. Popular Culture on the Page, Stage, and Screen* by Erika Abad.

I am grateful to our authors for contributing their wealth of knowledge to the journal, and to our peer reviewers for their dedication to the journal. I hope that you enjoy the contents of this issue.

Dr. Amy M. Green, Editor, *Popular Culture Review*