

# The *Popular Culture Studies Journal* Reviews: Introduction

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When my predecessor, Malynnda Johnson, asked me to take over as Reviews Editor, I knew immediately that I wanted to continue to include reviews of popular culture texts such as films, television shows, video games, analog games, and more. As Malynnda stated in her introduction to the reviews section in Volume 5, Issue 1-2 of this journal, it is vital to include reviews of such texts alongside reviews of scholarly books because “popular culture is not limited by printed media” (141). As scholars of popular culture, we often use these types of texts in our classrooms or research to illustrate various theories or ideas of the world. For example, I included the films *The Big City* (Satyajit Ray, 1963) and *Wake in Fright* (Ted Kotcheff, 1971) in my class on masculinity and communication because, in addition to being great films, they helped me illustrate gender hierarchies and notions of masculinity in specific times and places (India in the 1950s/1960s and Australia in the 1970s, respectively). Of course, given the nature of our profession, we are often too busy to consume the very thing we study, as teaching, research, writing, and service obligations often prevent us from seeing the newest films, playing the hottest video games, or reading the most buzzed-about comic book series. Thus, it is important that a journal such as ours include reviews of popular culture texts regardless of their release date, as this helps point scholars in the direction of important pedagogical tools they might have missed or overlooked. As Reviews Editor, I am making it my mission to ensure that the reviews included in this section highlight just some of the ways that these texts might be used in pedagogical or scholarly situations.

In this issue, readers will find reviews of two of the hottest films of 2019: *Parasite* (Bong Joon Ho), which made history as the first South Korean film to win the Academy Award for Best Picture; and *Midsommar* (Ari Aster). The former focuses on how *Parasite* expertly uses place and architecture to illustrate the contentious relationship between upper and lower classes in South Korea while the latter considers how *Midsommar* deftly uses horror to explore the paradox between

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attraction and repulsion. Also in this section are reviews of the Netflix original movie *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* (Chiwetel Ejiofor, 2019), which examines how the film connects popular culture and postcolonial economy, and the Netflix series *Insatiable*, which offers insight into how the show critiques mainstream beauty standards while celebrating feminine rage. In addition, this issue features more traditional book reviews looking at scholarly texts examining comic books, streaming platforms, film criticism and preservation, viral music videos, and more. The section even features a review of the book *Acid for the Children*, a memoir written by Red Hot Chili Peppers bassist Flea that provides an in-depth historical account of Los Angeles' grassroots music scene of the 1960s. I hope that these reviews point you to some books or texts you may have missed and provide you with some inspiration for how to integrate different popular culture texts into your classroom or research.

Before I sign off, I just want to take a moment to sing the praises of those who came before. I am indebted to both Malynnda and former Reviews Editor Jennifer Dunn for establishing such a solid foundation for this section during their tenures. Their vision and effort helped expand the reviews section from a compilation focused solely on reviews of scholarly books to something that encompasses the depth and breadth of popular culture, thus setting it apart from more traditional reviews sections found in other journals. Additionally, the policies and procedures they developed work so well that I do not need to make many changes, which makes my job infinitely easier. As such, they have my eternal gratitude. Finally, I want to take a moment to introduce my Assistant Reviews Editor, Sarah Pawlak Stanley of Marquette University. Sarah provided invaluable help in preparing all these reviews for publication, and I am thankful she agreed to serve as my second pair of eyes. We both hope that these reviews inspire you to write your own and send them our way. Information about how to submit reviews can be found on the *Popular Culture Studies Journal* website. In the meantime, please enjoy the following.