

Editorial: Being Different

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This story of the introduction of Popular Culture into academia...is sometimes sad, often aggravating, the story is nevertheless always optimistic and pleasurable because it charts a movement which is pushing back some of the impediments to a proper American education, cracking some of the shells of the holy of holies about education, and rewriting forever some of the myths and rituals about American Academia.¹

Ray B. Browne

Studying popular culture makes us different from, perhaps, some other more established and traditional disciplines. What we do, by nature, crosses several boundaries in terms of what we research, why we research, and how we research. In short we are different.

When my mentor and advisor, Bob Batchelor, mentioned that he was starting this open access journal, I was beyond enthusiastic. I could follow in my parents' footsteps of being different. My father was one of the first television producers in Taiwan to launch a show in a banned dialect. He was different. My mother started one of the first bilingual Chinese/English magazines in the U.S. She was different. I could leverage what I learned from them (writing/editing/production) and from my corporate experiences to make this journal a reality. I wanted to be different.

In 1989, our intellectual forefather, Ray B. Browne, wrote that Midwest PCA/ACA was one of the more effective and active regional chapters of the national association (91). I hope we can continue to carry

¹ (Browne 3)
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that mantle by challenging what is holy and taken for granted. I hope to celebrate that difference now, as well as in our upcoming special issues centered on professional wrestling, monstrosity, as well as Asian American & Pacific Worlds.

In this current volume, I hope we challenge the way we re/consider popular culture. Sarah Symonds LeBlanc invites us to investigate Princess Leia and consider her as an alternative to Cinderella feminism. Mary Rosner and Scott Rogers gives us a different understanding of space as they guide us through the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Kentucky. Karen McGrath shows us how a non-lead character in a comic book series can challenge social norms. From there, Kristy Tucciarone shows us the importance of celebrities in popular culture in a different higher education environment. Together, I hope we are starting conversations about being different.

Before I sign off, I want to offer my appreciation to a few important individuals. First, I wish to thank the Executive Council of MPCA/ACA for allowing me this chance to continue to make *The Popular Cultural Studies Journal (PCSJ)* different. I would like to thank Bob for creating such a wonderful forum for scholars and broader audiences to engage with popular culture. Bob has not only been an amazing mentor for me, he has also been a champion and ally on my behalf. I would like to thank Kathleen Turner for her continued friendship and service. She is moving on after this volume. I feel great sorrow that Midwest PCA/ACA and higher education, are losing such a formidable teacher, planner/organizer, and researcher.

I also want to acknowledge our new editors. My special appreciation goes out to Julia Largent for taking on the mantle of managing editor. She has been an amazing partner in organizing this volume. I can honestly say

that this volume could not have existed without her. I would also like to thank Garret Castleberry for starting as our assistant editor. Maja Bajac-Carter was also, initially, an assistant editor. As this year progressed, she moved out of academia. This is another profound loss. Lastly, I would also like to thank our new copy editor, Heather Flynn for her keen eye.

This is also the first year that Malynnda Johnson is taking on the role of editing reviews. She, with the assistance of Jessica Benham, has put together an amazing array of reviews that span from broadly ranging encyclopedias to specific popular culture texts. I look forward to Malynnda expanding this section in future volumes to include more than printed media.

Lastly, I want to thank my partner/husband for taking time out of producing television, to once again make a one of a kind and special cover for us. He has been here since the first volume, and an important part of making *PCSJ* unique among a sea of academic journals.

Works Cited

Browne, Ray B. *Against Academia: The History of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association and the Popular Culture Movement, 1967-1988*. Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989.