

From the editor

No Monoliths Here

The title above is certainly not meant as a rejection of Stanley Kubrick. Instead, it is just one more reminder of the variety of voices of popular culture. “P-C-A-S,” said a woman observing our t-shirts in a hotel lobby. “Does that mean the Politically Correct Association?” No, it most certainly does not. The Popular Culture Association in the South, the sponsoring organization of *Studies in Popular Culture*, is a group of many separate voices. Some of the essays in this issue will appeal to certain members of the group, while other articles will be strongly commended by readers who don’t care much about still a third set. Some represent views that certain scholars might indeed call politically correct, while others have nothing to do with that perspective. Yet we all hang together (so as not to hang separately). As contributor Delia Poey says, “Popular culture . . . has multiple, and at times contradictory, speakers and messages. It does not represent monolithically” (2). We thoroughly enjoy the fact that this issue bounces from salsa to the soft-focus South to *Star Trek*, from the Jesus fish to the Whopper—and we hope that you will, too.

Poey’s essay is the first in this, the second issue of the thirty-second volume. She considers two songs—one salsa and one country; one by the Dixie Chicks, one by Celia Cruz—which deal with domestic violence. Both represent radical responses but do so using musical forms and qualities long established in a patriarchal tradition. In doing so, Poey discusses race, class, and gender in both musical genres. We move from music to popular novels with Eleanor Hersey Nickel’s discussion of Jan Karon’s best-selling series of Mitford novels, centered on an Episcopalian priest and placed in an idealized small town in North Carolina. How genuinely regional are they, she asks—just how Southern? She comments on the author’s ambivalence and notes that a sharper turn from idealization to reality in the latest book in the series seems to have met serious fan resistance. Nickel used a survey of fans of the novels to help establish some of her conclusions. As for the fans of *Star Trek*, they have, among other enterprises, created a complete language based on a few utterances in the series attributed to the fictional alien species of the Klingons. Members of the Klingon Language Institute have produced translations of Shakespeare—specifically, *Hamlet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Since they fictionally claim that the plays are, in fact, translations from works originally in Klingon (based on a line from one of the *Star Trek* movies), they present a particularly intriguing case of the nature of translation and adaptation, which Karolina Kazimierczak explores with thoroughness and careful contextualization. Contextualization is also important for Todd Edmondson’s work on the Jesus fish, a cultural icon that has swum in tempest-

tuous religious waters for many centuries now. Edmondson traces the symbol's significance in image and text from the third century to its Australian reemergence into the current culture wars. American culture and attitudes are the focus of Margaret Hrezo and William E. Hrezo's examination of two master American filmmakers, King Vidor and Robert Altman, both of whom, in their long careers, "captur[e] essential elements of the nation's political values and behavior." Moving from full-length films to the brief form of television commercials, we are given an anthropologist's perspective on a series of fast-food advertisements. Ty Matejowsky discusses the controversial "Whopper Virgin" campaign, with its inclusion (though that may be the wrong term) of indigenous Hmong, Inuit, and Maramures people. He places these commercials within a brief history of the use of indigenous people in U.S. advertisements. Elizabeth Monk-Turner and her students Mary Heiserman, Crystle Johnson, Vanity Cotton, and Manny Jackson place their own work carefully within the history of sociological studies of television, building on the 2000 work of Mastro and Greenberg to provide a more up-to-date study of the representation of racial minorities on prime time, dealing with Caucasian, African American, and Latino characters. And to round out the variety, we present reviews of books on graphic novels, television and film, music, and pulp fiction.

We thank the contributors for their illumination of these varied facets of popular culture—the mica-shine of a far-from-monolithic structure. This issue, as usual, also owes a great deal to the work of the members of the editorial board, not to mention Associate Editor/ Book Reviews Editor David Janssen. Their work as reviewers is extremely important for the journal. We also wish to thank, for their invaluable help in the reviewing process, the following colleagues: David Broad; Agnes Curry; Kathy Forni; Jill Hague; Donna Waller Harper; Mark Milewicz; Lewis Moore; Ananya Mukherjea; Marc Napolitano; Anne Petersen; Roy Schwartzman; and Lisa Yaszek.

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