Managing Editor's Note 2022

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A Message from the Managing Editor

When I approached this year’s edition, I wanted to continue the tradition of looking for an overarching theme that encapsulated the pieces selected for publication. But when I looked over the pieces, my fear from last year resurfaced: how can I bring these together in a single word? But as I again looked through the submissions, it became evident to me that the pieces were about exploring what it means to belong or looking for ways that could reconcile a perceived lack of belonging. To me, it only made sense to pick the word “Belonging” as a result—even one of our titles used it! Such a focus on belonging speaks to the current college generation’s struggle with determining community and belonging after coming out of a multi-year pandemic that left many alone, isolated, and unsure of how to create community as a twenty-something. And I firmly believe that the struggle is real! I tried to capture the idea of “belonging” in the cover art by looking to the local haunts for inspiration. To me, Binghamton has hidden pockets of community with strong senses of cultures that open their arms to anyone willing to join. A former student of mine joined the rugby team on campus and immediately found a sense of belonging off-campus with the locals who played as well. She even competed with them at a local tournament put on in conjunction with Beer Tree Brewing! I found my people at the now closed Cyber Cafe West—a restaurant on the West Side of Binghamton that served as a haven for faculty and graduate students desperate for a place to work on their articles with a good beer and a relaxing atmosphere. Such places exist across Binghamton for those who are willing to look and why I chose the community as the inspiration for the cover art. Like the articles within this edition, Binghamton looks random on the outside with its penchant for hot air balloon launching, carousels, and heated discussions over the pronunciation of “Endicott.” However, a deeper look reveals that the community is a place where people are looking to belong and exploring what that means to them and their unique experience.

The works of our authors demonstrate such exploration as each considers the difficulty of what it means to survive, express your gender, or come to terms with the ever-expanding university community. Emily Corso’s article, “Strong Female Character and The Fighting Fuck Toy: A Comparative Analysis of Katniss and Glimmer in The Hunger Games,” juxtaposes two female characters in Suzanne Collins’ popular text and questions how complicated their representations of femininity are when compared. Martin Dolan’s work, “Questions of Canon in Gilbert Hernandez's ‘Palomar’ Comics,” explores how graphic novels, particularly those of Hernandez, demonstrate important cultural issues and literary value, despite their status as media more for entertainment. Trevor Fornara looks at how homelessness and low-income housing have been affected by the rising student population flooding the Binghamton community in his article, “A Housing Market on the Rise, Leaving Many Behind: Voices of Binghamton on the Housing Crisis.” Aidan Gajewski’s article, “Food Insecurity in Broome County and its Effect on Adolescent Academic Performance,” examines the relationship between food insecurity and test scores in elementary school-aged children in Broome County and suggests that there is a greater need for supplementary lunch programming. Andonia Gountanis’ collection of poems take us across various landscapes and experiences, asking us to immerse ourselves in the simple pleasures of life. Nusrat Islam and Leah Cingranelli looked at minority versus non-minority groups in Binghamton University’s campus and investigatet how included they felt in their community in their article, “Sense of Belonging of LGBTQ+, Racial Minority, and Religiously Affiliated College Students at Binghamton University.” Amanda Larch’s article, “Hollywood Industry: Asian Americans on Screen and Behind the Scenes,” observes that major Asian American stars use their success to create a network of support in order to
develop greater support and inclusivity for lesser known actors and to provide more knowledge about issues of representation on screen. In his article, “Analyzing The Contribution of Western Acculturation to The Socio-Economic Disenfranchisement of Pakistani Expatriates in the United Arab Emirates,” Muhammah Murtaza Ali considers how the adoption of Western capitalistic tendencies in the United Arab Emirates have created power dynamics that prevent the success of Pakistani expatriates and force them into subservient situations. Mia Rabkin’s article, “U.S. Covert Actions in the Indonesian Genocide: The International Criminal Court,” considers how the U.S. government during the Cold War mobilized violent revolutionary action in Asia, particularly in Indonesia, and questions why such intervention never require that the U.S. take accountability for their involvement. Clementine Sherman looks at the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girl’s crisis in Canada in her article, “Empty Apologies: Canada’s Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Crisis,” and argues how the COVID-19 pandemic serves as a scapegoat for the lack of action taken by the Candadian government to end this human rights issue. Jobim Steyermak examines how political parties gain support in urban versus rural demographics, using various countries as case studies to examine if this is a particularly U.S. issue or is prevalent elsewhere in the article, “The Urban Left Versus the Rural Right: A Universal or Conditional Phenomenon?” The final article in this edition, “Young Adult and Canonical Literature Instruction in the High School Classroom: Assessing Students’ Reading Interest,” by Alexis Yang, considers if teaching young adult fiction to high school-aged students versus canonical texts would positively affect their interest in their classrooms.

I want to thank the members of the Editorial Board for their dedication to the journal and the thoughtfulness put into the decision-making process for publication. I want to also thank the reviewers for providing helpful and insightful critiques that authors could apply to their articles and for the levels of engagement and encouragement that were communicated to students. I want to thank Shermon Bradwell for taking up the mantle of this publication during the final stages and learning this new responsibility without complaint.

Finally, myself and everyone involved with Alpenglow: Binghamton University’s Undergraduate Journal, want to thank the readers for taking the time to engage with the works of our authors who have dedicated extensive time and energy into the works they have produced.

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