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Editor's Introduction 2023

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Dear *Access* reader

It is my absolute pleasure to present the seventh volume of *Access: Interdisciplinary Journal of Student Research and Scholarship*. The five papers included in this volume embody some of this year's best writing from students in majors across the UW Tacoma campus community—from Law and Policy to Communications and Computer Science to Environmental Sustainability to Arts, Media and Culture. Representing a variety of subjects, they examine ideas such as: the relationship of humans and nature presented in film, the depiction of masculinity in KPop boy bands, a critique of capitalism as seen in a Korean television series, an examination of cultural appropriation in New Age music, and the legal and ethical impact of the prison system on incarcerated transgender individuals. Each of these articles, originally written as class assignments, have undergone a rigorous review process and reappeared, ready for a new audience.

I am pleased to introduce each article—and their authors—here.

Our first article, by Brooklyn Jennings, is a thought-provoking examination of "The Violation of Transgender Prisoners: Gender Discrimination's Violent Impact on Incarcerated Trans People in the USA." Jennings, a recent Law and Policy graduate with a minor in Human Rights, takes a comprehensive look at the challenges faced by transgender individuals in the U.S. prison system and considers both complex legal issues and the higher risk of violence and discrimination they endure. Their article also addresses the crucial roles of scholarly research, grassroots advocacy, and national associations in holding the criminal justice system accountable to protect the rights and safety of transgender prisoners.

"The Appropriation of Buddhism in New Age Music: New Age Musicians can do Better at Representing Buddhist Cultures," was written by Jack Robinett, a first-generation Vietnamese

America majoring in Environmental Sustainability. In this article, Robinett critically examines the topic of cultural appropriation in the music industry, offering the representations of Buddhist culture within the New Age music genre as example. Exploring the work of New Age musician Ashana as a case study of sorts, the article shines a light on the challenges of respecting culture when incorporating aspects of otherwise spiritual practices into secular music. Finally, Robinett calls on musicians—indeed, all of us—to be more culturally aware and responsible in their creative endeavors, reflecting on our cultural interactions and striving to "do better."

Next, UW Tacoma senior and Arts, Media and Culture major Yuri Arakaki, delves into the captivating world of the Netflix series "Squid Game" through a Marxist lens. Arakaki's article "Anti-Capitalist Ideologies Uncovered in the Marxist Analysis of Hwang Dong-hyuk's Netflix Original 'Squid Game,'" highlights the thought-provoking nature of the series but also calls for global economic reform, underlining the urgency of addressing pressing issues like poverty, inequality, and the erosion of humanity within capitalist structures. "Squid Game" serves as a powerful mirror reflecting the darker sides of capitalism, while Arakaki asks readers to consider the messages it offers about a capitalist society.

In "The Relationship Between the Forest and Mankind: A semiotic Analysis of Ecofeminism in Princess Mononoke," Arts, Media and Culture major, Taylor Bailey, critiques Hayao Miyazaki's classic film, "Princess Mononoke." Bailey uses an ecofeminist lens to explore the film's portrayals of gender, sexuality, colonization, and ableism, as well as the human relationship with nature, in the characters and imagery. This dive below the surface of the film uncovers meanings that offer implications for broader discussions on film analysis and ecofeminist critique.

Finally, UW Tacoma senior Maria Babko, carrying a double major in Communication and Computer Science, has taken on the topic of "How Boy Bands Across the World are Changing the Definition of Masculinity." In her article, she takes a sociological lens to the iconic Korean

KPop group, BTS, examining how their music video, *Dynamite*, redefines what it means to 'be a man' by challenging the traditional norms of masculinity. Babko examines the intriguing ways boy bands embrace feminine and homosexual tones in their fashion, actions, and backgrounds, noting that contrary to the stigmatization of these ideologies in mainstream media, these bands are celebrated, thanks primarily to their diverse and accepting fan base.

I am certain you'll enjoy each one of these articles.

As we approach the finish line for this seventh volume of *Access*, I'd like to offer a huge thank you to this year's review board made up of faculty, staff and librarians—Donald Chin, Janelle Hawes, Kelvin Keown, Johanna Jacobsen Kiciman, Kylie Lanthorn, Alex Miller, Cassie Miura, Ellen Moore, and Anaid Yerena—who worked diligently through the summer, through two rounds of reviews. I'd also like to thank the student authors who took those reviews to heart and revised their papers—more than once—into the polished articles you will read in this issue. Congratulations, your hard work shines through!

And finally, I'd like to thank my assistant editors, Brandy Garcia and James Hannes. Brandy was a new addition to the *Access* staff this year but jumped right in to help with our editorial reviews before papers were returned to authors for approval. James, an *Access* veteran of five years, did a yeoman's job during the always challenging final copyediting. Without this amazing group of people, this volume would never have happened! Thank you!

And to all our readers, I hope you enjoy this issue!

Margaret Lundberg, Ph.D.

Editor in Chief, *Access: Interdisciplinary Journal of Student Research and Scholarship*