

## Welcome from the Editors: Fall 2009

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Journal*, or *The IJPC Journal*. The journal is an outgrowth of the Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Project, whose stated mission is to investigate and analyze, through research and publication, the conflicting images of the journalist in film, television, radio, fiction (novels, short stories, plays, poetry), commercials, cartoons, comic books, video games, music, art, and other aspects of popular culture.

The concept of a *journalist* dates back to 1693 when it simply meant one who earned his living by editing or writing for a public journal. Over time, the journalist has grown to mean much more than someone involved in the production of printed journals. The word has become a synonym for an individual who reports and writes/broadcasts in any news medium. We define a journalist as anyone in any century who performs the function of the journalist: to gather and disseminate news and information.

However, we also are interested in the image of the documentary producer, public relations practitioner, and media consultant because of their relationships to journalists and to the news and information process. Consequently, we welcome articles about individuals working in media-related areas.

We hope *The IJPC Journal* will serve as a catalyst for rigorous scholarly inquiry that goes beyond the glosses that the media themselves tend to give the subject. Whenever new movies focusing on journalism appear, as with 2009's *State of Play* and *The Soloist*, pieces follow in print, broadcast, and online outlets ruminating about what such pictures suggest about the relationship of the public to the press. Quite often, those articles do not do much more than

provide a brief overview of classic journalism movies and a lament about how people seem not to respect the press as much as they did once upon a time.

The serious scholar can and should do more, particularly given that the subject matter extends well beyond movies. There is a substantial literature and knowledge base upon which to build, a massive database of materials to analyze, and a multitude of research perspectives and tools to employ. The four research articles in this debut issue of *The IJPC Journal* serve as exemplars.

Stephen Siff's "Carrying the Banner: The Portrayal of the American Newsboy Myth in the Disney Musical *Newsies*" looks to journalism's past. He utilizes scholarly studies of how Hollywood movies typically portray American history in comparing the actual events of the 1899 New York City newsboy strike with the 1992 Disney musical reimagining of the strike. In contrast, J. Richard Stevens' "On the Front Line: Portrayals of War Correspondents in Marvel Comics' *Civil War: Front Line*" explores a darker depiction of journalism through the realm of science fiction. His analysis of a recent comic book series points to a sophisticated critique of real-life post-9/11 news coverage.

Radhika Parameswaran's "Moral Dilemmas of an Immoral Nation: Gender, Sexuality, and Journalism in *Page 3*" draws upon feminist and postcolonial studies in analyzing the image of the female journalist in a popular Indian movie. She finds a decidedly mixed portrayal – on the one hand, a provocative critique of the shallow market orientation of today's Indian newspapers, and on the other, a patriarchal depiction of the young female protagonist. Amanda Rossie's "Looking to the Margins: The 'Outsider Within' Journalistic Fiction" similarly draws upon feminist scholarship, but focuses instead on American minority and lesbian-themed niche fiction. She examines three novels and demonstrates how the authors (both former journalists)

provide poignant accounts of the conflicted existences that minority and lesbian journalists lead in white, male, heterosexual-dominated newsrooms.

In addition to presenting refereed research articles, *The IJPC Journal* provides a forum for features and commentaries where writers can discuss trends and share critical opinions. Bill Knight's "Comic Book Journalists Beyond Clark Kent" presents a vividly illustrated historical overview of the comics' depictions' of the press while serving as a useful supplement to Stevens' analysis of *Front Line*. When he submitted his article, Knight observed, "This piece is more journalistic than academic, using reporting more than scholarly commentary, with comic industry insiders – including three working journalists – interviewed as primary sources." His article is an excellent example of what we're looking for in a feature published in *The IJPC Journal*.

Matthew C. Ehrlich's "Studying the Journalist in Popular Culture" is listed in the Introduction because it articulates the rewards of studying the journalist in popular culture and offers a roadmap for research in this area. However, Ehrlich's commentary could just as easily have been listed in the Features section. We would like to see essays – either critical or personal – that offer wit and imagination as well as examination, dissection, and contemplation of events and ideas grounded in a believable authority.

We hope you enjoy and learn from this premiere issue of *The IJPC Journal*. We invite your comments and suggestions, and most important, we invite your submissions.

*Matthew C. Ehrlich*  
*Sammye Johnson*  
*Joe Saltzman*