

# Preface

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**A**s this year's editor of the McMaster Journal of Communication, I am extremely proud to present the fourth annual volume. The purpose of this publication is to showcase the immense talent of the students in the Humanities discipline at McMaster University, particularly within the Communication Studies program, giving its undergraduate students a chance to enter the world of publishing academic work sooner than most. The five papers that were chosen for this edition represent the incredibly diverse, articulate and innovative ideas present in the fields of Communication and the Humanities. Each of the authors presents a unique perspective on modern communicative practices, from the concentration of mass mediated ownership to the discursive dynamics of the mail-order bride industry. These papers were chosen by me and an anonymous peer selection committee from an initial submission pool of forty essays. The selection process was extremely competitive, and we were continually overwhelmed by the quality and scope of work that was emerging from the students in the faculty. Finally narrowed down to five excellent pieces, this year's theme of Communication, Culture and Media is embodied by works as broad and diverse as the topic suggests.

The first paper, remarkably insightful and sophisticated, was written by prodigious first year student Owen Pikkert. His essay "Function after Form: The Democratic Detriment of Episodic Television News" explores the detrimental effects of standardized broadcasting practices, and the modern techniques of television news production. The paper analyzes the way in which the average citizen consumes televised news, as framed by information producers, discussing how the process impedes and limits political mobilization. Owen, majoring in history and philosophy, will be attending Divinity school after he graduates.

The second essay, entitled "To Sir with Love: A Critical Analysis of the Transnational Community Communicated through the Mail-Order Bride Industry" by Gillian Brooks provides an intriguing look at the discursive character of the mail order bride industry. Using works of art and modern cultural artifacts such as Victoria Secret catalogues, she argues that the long enduring narrative of the Other's colonization by the patriarchal first world male is embodied by this industry. The paper also emphasizes the paradoxical nature of the trade, as it relies heavily on the cultivation of nostalgia through the usage of older methods of communication, such as letter-writing. Gillian recently graduated with distinction from the Communication Studies and Comparative Literature programs at McMaster and will be continuing her studies at Georgetown University in pursuit of a Master's degree in Communication, Culture and Technology.

In her essay "Mistaking Brands for Tween Identity", Danielle Hulan examines the evolution of the 'tween' generation, concentrating on the commodification of the young cohort. The paper explores how the generation is uniquely targeted by advertising firms in an increasingly interactive manner, such as through the integration of products into video games and advertising via the Internet. She warns of the detrimental effects of pervasive and aggressive

marketing strategies during such a vulnerable period in young adolescents' lives, outlining the dangers inherent in the commodification of childhood. Danielle has also recently graduated with distinction from McMaster with a degree in Mass Communication and Psychology. After backpacking throughout Australia and New Zealand, she will be pursuing further studies in Clinical Psychology.

In "Social Movements and the News Media", Katryna Szagala and Katherine Phipps analyze the media coverage of the June, 2000 Queen's Park Riot in Toronto. Using this case study as a benchmark, the paper outlines the precarious nature of mediated coverage of social protests, as the causes are often portrayed in a damaging light in the popular press, particularly concerning repressed or disadvantaged groups. Katherine graduated this year with an Honours degree in Sociology, and Katryna will graduate with the same degree in December. Both authors plan to take some time to travel and explore different cultures after graduation.

The last paper, "News as a Big Business: CanWest Global's Newspaper Ownership" by Krista Bennett critically examines media ownership in Canada, particularly regarding the dominating influence of CanWest Global. Tracing the history of the company's numerous acquisitions in a number of vertical markets, the paper outlines the nature of a near-monopolized mediated environment, warning that it delimits the number of political and social perspectives consumed by the general public. Krista graduated with distinction from the Communication Studies program at McMaster, and plans to begin the Public Relations program at Mohawk College in September.

Although these pieces cover a wide variety of topics, the recurring theme is the close analysis of communicative dynamics in a modern, highly mediated setting. It has been my pleasure to assemble a group of papers that are at once articulate and widely relevant, demonstrating the extraordinary talent that can be found at the undergraduate level. I wish each author the very best in their future endeavours, and I am sure that they will all be successful regardless of which path they choose. I would also like to thank my Peer Review committee, whose humour and decision-making skills made our reviewing sessions very enjoyable. In addition, I would like to express gratitude towards the faculty members within the Communication Studies department, as well as the Editorial board for the Journal, whose guidance, encouragement and recognition of outstanding undergraduate work is an invaluable incentive to those just beginning to embark on their academic careers. Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Alex Sevigny, whose unconditional support of both myself and the Journal has been exceptional. Without his passion, the publication would not thrive from year to year.