

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF, MARIA BAKARDJIEVA

The Motley is now out of its toddler stage. This is its issue #3! It is walking confidently on its own feet and its eagerness to explore the world has grown exponentially. To produce one issue of a brand new journal could be seen as a stroke of luck, the second issue is a proof of commitment, and the third issue marks an established and reliable track. Our Motley is turning into an institution. Its name has become familiar. It comes up in conversations; undergraduate students have it at the back of their minds when they take up course projects; professors think of it when they read an impressively strong paper. The Motley, in other words, is now a recognized member of our community and a valuable participant in its activities.

Equally important, our talented managing editors have put in place effective organization to ensure that the processes bringing consecutive issues into existence will roll on unabated. The heart and soul of this organization are people – the curious, innovative, aspiring members of the reviewing and editing teams, students who are determined to make the most of their university years. Working on the Motley, they work on their own professional skills and do it in a fun and supportive environment, in collaboration with peers, and in consultation with professors. In the end, there is something they can show for these efforts – a beautiful new journal issue. A win for them, and a win for our academic community!

The current issue of the Motley invites us to reflect on two questions critical for our tumultuous media environment: the representation of minorities as both objects and producers of cultural content and the changing practices of journalism that make the space of news generation more inclusive and at the same time fiercely contested. The published articles clearly demonstrate our undergraduate authors' engagement with the challenges posed by the implementation of equity, diversity and inclusion policies by media organizations. They highlight problematic stereotypical and post-racial representation practices permeating popular culture. The authors' critical awareness is effectively informed by central concepts of media theory that serve as tools for insightful analysis. The novel developments in the field of news production and distribution, for their part, have compelled our authors to scrutinize the blurring of boundaries between professional journalists and their audiences. Wisely, both the participatory possibilities and the severe limitations imposed by corporate social media platforms are taken into account. A similarly nuanced investigation illuminates the two sides of breast cancer awareness campaigns where survivors and interested corporate entities compete in shaping the narrative.

To put it in a few words, The Motley bravely throws itself at some of the most complex puzzles that plague our media-saturated culture. It stands out as a meeting place for young minds determined to tackle these puzzles. It serves as an effective interface between vexing social concerns and academic enquiry, between educational self-development and useful contribution to the real life of the community. Let's wish Issue 3 smooth sailing into this exciting space!

Dr. Maria Bakardjieva, Editor-in-Chief