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Editorial

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Abstract

This editorial for issue 12 of *JOMEC Journal* gives an overview of the journal's content and introduces specific articles.

Contributor Note

Paul Bowman is executive editor of *JOMEC Journal*, Evelina Kazakeviciute is editor, and Julia Boelle, Evelina Kazakeviciute, Petra Kovacevic, Metji Makgoba, and Alida Payson are the editorial team.

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Traditionally, issues of *JOMEC Journal* have been organised by specific themes. However, we have become increasingly aware of a demand for open issues. As a result, the current issue is an open issue, which publishes work that has not come in response to a specific call or a specific theme. Nonetheless, even though each contribution was submitted in isolation, some very interesting connections between these discrete articles have emerged.

This becomes apparent even on a quick survey of the titles: Douglas Wile's article is entitled 'Debaters of the Bedchamber: China Reexamines Ancient Sexual Practices'. Then Benny Lim and Samson Tang offer 'Queering Singlehood in Mainland China'. This is followed by 'From "Celluloid Comrades" to "Digital Video Activism": Queer Filmmaking in Postsocialist China' by Hongwei Bao.

Following these China-focused articles comes Antje Glück's 'Do emotions fit the frame? A critical appraisal of visual framing research approaches' and 'Competing Narratives in Framing Disability in the UK Media' by Diana Garrisi and Jacob Johanssen. These are followed by 'Press coverage of the debate that followed the *News of the World* phone hacking scandal' by Binakuromo Ogbemor, and finally "'Spying for the People": Surveillance, Democracy and the Impasse of Cynical Reason' by Michael Kaplan.

Douglas Wile's 'Debaters of the Bedchamber: China Reexamines Ancient Sexual Practices' is situated in the study of sexology and as its central theme addresses the ancient art of the bedchamber and traditional sex practices in China. As the author notes, the incentive and foundation behind this

research is that the ancient art of the bedchamber has been 'a cultural constant in China and a subject of controversy for more than two-thousand years'. With its sharp contrast to Western norms of sexuality, it provides a topic of central interest to us even today (Wile 2018).

The structure of the article begins with an exploration of the traditional sex culture in different historical eras of ancient China. The author then draws on textual sources to establish various standpoints on the arts of the bedchamber, and continues with a synopsis of the theory and practice behind them. Based on this theoretical context, Wile moves on to explore how the bedchamber arts are viewed and discussed in a range of communication and media forms such as panels of sexologists, in advice columns, talk shows, and online forums today. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of scholarly interpretations, also taking an interest in the perspective of Western scholarship on the matter.

'Queering Singlehood in Mainland China' by Benny Lim and Samson Tang discusses singlehood in relation to traditional Chinese culture, suggesting that state-backed media encourages marriage and stigmatizes those who do not conform to this direction in life. Although they may seem to experience stigmatization more than men, unmarried women are not the only victims: Chinese bachelors, too, fall prey to stigmatization.

Indeed, although in recent years there seems to have been more normalization of homosexuality due to the emergence of gay consumerism and the legalization of same-sex marriage, at the end of day,

be it for heterosexuals or homosexuals, marriage seems to remain regarded as the inevitable and necessary end to singlehood.

'From "Celluloid Comrades" to "Digital Video Activism": Queer Filmmaking in Postsocialist China' by Hongwei Bao gives a rich historical overview of Chinese 'new queer cinema' in the postsocialist era. It identifies a turn from an ambiguous portrayal of queer people by heterosexual filmmakers to an active participation of LGBTQ members in the production of film portrayals of their own lives.

The author addresses the political potential of queer filmmaking and queer film festivals in a country where public expressions of homosexuality are still considered problematic. In this sense, digital technologies are viewed as a powerful tool in ongoing representations of queer culture on film and effecting social change in China today. Even though it is necessarily selective and at times non-linear, this paper is a valuable contribution to the research area of Chinese queer cinematography. It also deepens understanding of the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community in China in general.

Antje Glück's 'Do emotions fit the frame? A critical appraisal of visual framing research approaches' deals with the question of whether the concept of visual framing can be enriched by the integration of emotive elements. It approaches this from a theoretical-empirical perspective by focusing on television news, asking in what way emotions manifest within audio-visual material, and how representations of emotions can be analysed.

The work distinguishes (i) the 'emotion frame', (ii) emotions underlying in narratives, and (iii) emotion as frame element. Resulting from this, it argues that emotions can best be conceptualized as a frame element; and the conclusion discusses the extent to which they are suitable for analysing emotions in the visual.

Garrisi and Johanssen's 'Competing Narratives in Framing Disability in the UK Media' uses discourse analysis to compare and contrast the journalistic coverage of the story of a beauty blogger with facial disfigurement with that of her own work on her blog. It examines the extent to which a self-representational account may align with the journalistic coverage, reinforcing rather than contesting mainstream representations of disability. However, it also demonstrates how blogging can be used to reclaim identity and challenge the medical objectification of bodies perpetuated by mainstream media. This reveals that rather than being mutually exclusive, journalism and blogging can play a complementary role in shaping society's understanding of the complexities and contradictions surrounding disfigurement.

'Press coverage of the debate that followed the News of the World phone hacking scandal: the use of sources in journalistic metadiscourse' by Binakuromo Ogbemor discusses the use of sources in journalistic metadiscourse (news coverage of Journalism).

Through content and discourse analyses of news articles on the press reform debate that followed the *News of the World* phone hacking scandal, the author found that press coverage of media policy debates is characterised by a

doubly narrow spectrum of sources. It identified a trend in which issues regarded as being in the interest of the press were given higher quality of space in the journalistic metadiscourse to the detriment of the arguments of other stakeholders.

The study affirms that the gatekeeping powers of the media are prone to abuse when the media cover themselves. In addition, it highlights the need for the press to expand their use of sources and function as a democratic public sphere in debates about themselves. The article will be useful to researchers interested in journalistic metadiscourse, media policy debates, sources, the public sphere, the gatekeeping theory and the media's role in a democratic society.

The final article is "Spying for the People": Surveillance, Democracy and the Impasse of Cynical Reason' by Michael Kaplan. This essay examines the Snowden affair as a sort of Rorschach test that traces the contours of what the author calls 'the impasse of cynical reason'. Kaplan contends that the emerging form of algorithmic dataveillance today both elicits and actively thwarts theoretical and critical approaches predicated on a normative,

symbolic model of epistemology that this form aspires to supplant. As a result, what such approaches tend to discern in the emerging culture of surveillance are its own epistemological commitments – the very ones comprising the impasse of cynical reason. Breaking out of this impasse, he argues, will require disrupting the deep, hidden complicity of such critique with its ostensible object. He contends that this will require taking seriously the often disingenuous or fallacious arguments on behalf of dataveillance.

We are very pleased to publish all of these articles, which represent a cross-section of the full range that we received in response to our open call for submissions on any area of the interlocking fields of journalism studies, media studies and cultural studies. Further contributions will be published in our next open issue.

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Petra Kovacevic
Metji Makgoba
Alida Payson

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To submit a paper or to discuss publication, please contact jomecjournal@cardiff.ac.uk

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