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## **Editorial: Troubling Times and the Urgency to Adapt**

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Though it now feels like a decade ago but, simultaneously, like only yesterday, we might vaguely remember the turn of 2020, which had, as always, started with new year's resolutions and positive vibes for the future, near and distant. In the spirit of the times, my dear colleague Selen Aktari Sevgi and I were exhilarated with pride and joy about our new roles as Editor and Editor-in-Chief, respectively, of the highly-esteemed *JAST*. We could not stop contemplating in which ways we would contribute to the role at hand, all the while living up to the high standards set by our predecessors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous editors, Özlem Uzundemir and Berkem Güreñci Sağlam, of Çankaya University, with whom I had the pleasure of working together for many years at Başkent University.

Before long, however, we were all hit by the shock and horrors of the Covid-19 pandemic which atrociously took hold of the world and halted life as we knew it. At present, approximately 15 months into the pandemic and unable still to clearly see the light at the end of tunnel, we continue to experience vacillating feelings and try to come to terms with the uncanniness that has become the defining norm. We have had to un-learn what we knew best and re-learn what we thought we never could. If the 21<sup>st</sup> century has, thus far, taught us anything, I would argue that to be the urgency to adapt. Evidently those who can adapt to any given circumstances may find the peace of mind required at such troubling times. The cliché that “we are all in the same storm” might only provide temporary soothing, falling short in providing much-needed coping mechanisms.

In the midst of this storm, we were able to publish two issues, both of which were Special Issues that were submitted in almost-

pristine condition, owing to the meticulous efforts of their Issue Editors. I would like to express our gratitude to Nisa Harika Güzel Köşker, for Issue 53, and to Meldan Tanrısal, for Issue 54. The Issue at hand, the 3<sup>rd</sup> in row, is a General Issue which, similar to the aura of our times, has been testing in nature. Yet it gradually matured into its entirety with the collaborated efforts of all parties involved, and I would like to thank members of our Editorial Board and all reviewers who took the time to evaluate each submission scrupulously.

Issue 55 attests to one of the founding principles of *JAST*, that is, to be groundbreaking in its contribution to American Studies nationally, as well as internationally. The variety of contributions to this issue, both in its topics and authors, depicts its multivocal and egalitarian essence. It comprises full-fledged academic discussions ranging from adoption narratives, dystopia, film, food writing, and life writing to spatiality and historical consciousness, from the female gothic to gay male sexuality and cowboy masculinity. It provides a platform for both senior academics and emerging scholars to present their work. As such, it demonstrates the practice of what we preach – freedom of speech, equality, and democracy, to name a few.

It seems that the only way to cope with the present, to retain some sense of normalcy would be to keep doing what we do – teach, research, write, edit, revise and repeat –, to further excel at multitasking, and to try doing our best to shed light on darkness. As Franz Roh claimed a century ago, yet in a totally different context, “We recognize this world, although now – not only because we have emerged from a dream – we look on it with new eyes” (17). The pandemic-seized world might differ vastly from the magic realism of Roh’s context, but emerging from this ‘nightmare,’ I am confident that we will embrace new ways of looking and seeing. And until we come out of the shadows, I hope everyone remains safe and sane.

### Work Cited

Roh, Franz. “Magical Realism: Post-Expressionism.” Trans. Wendy B. Farris. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois Parkison Zamora and Wendy B. Farris. Durham, N. C.: Duke UP, 1995. 16-31.