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Letter from the Editor

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

I am pleased to introduce the new issue of the *Hilltop Review*, Spring 2010. This product is the result of the work of many contributors from Western Michigan University.

My warm thanks go to President Dr. John M. Dunn, Provost Dr. Tim Greene and Dean of the Graduate College Dr. Lewis Pyenson for their continued support for the *Hilltop Review*. I also thank the chairs of the departments for their support and for securing faculty and graduate student reviewers.

I am also grateful to Dr. Leszek Lilien, my faculty advisor for the journal. Dr. Lilien coached me in developing, with the editorial board, the review process for the journal. He also mentored me in designing with the editorial board the format and the look of the journal. I also thank him for the several advices that he gave me on improving the visibility of the journal.

I thank Brandi Pritchett and Joel Luc Raveloharimisy former chair and new chair of the GSAC, respectively, who facilitated the production of the journal and also participated in all the editorial board meetings.

I thank all graduate students who submitted their work for the *Hilltop Review*. I thank faculty and graduate student reviewers for reviewing the articles, giving the committee their recommendations and comments and giving the authors comments and advice that help them to improve their work. I also thank the editorial board members for their hard work, commitments and sacrifices. I thank especially Ilse Anne Schweitzer, Michelle A McWilliams, Abdullah Shehabat, and Raed Salih for the extra work in copyediting the journal and helping to finalize preparing the issue.

In this issue, the editorial board selected 4 articles and 3 pieces of artwork that we hope you will enjoy. The first article, “White Thugs & Black Bodies: A Comparison of The Portrayal of African-American Women in Hip-hop Videos,” discusses the performance of young African-American women in rap and/or hip-hop videos. The study seeks the appearance and the attention to the male gaze and the ways in which African-American women negotiate their sexuality. It analyzes and compares the most popular music videos of Caucasian and African-American hip-hop artists from 2003-2005. It focuses on three prominent characteristics: (1) level of sexism; (2) presence of intimate touch and alluring attire; and (3) which race portrayed women in a more sexist manner.

The second selected article, “The Myth of Racial Superiority in Sports,” seeks to enlighten our collective understanding of sports and race in America by highlighting the inconsistencies in our commonly held assumptions about races and athletes. The author presents a number of arguments, some genetically based, others logic-driven, that critically expose the egregious nature of the many postulations and suppositions that Americans have regarding athletes, their race, and their athletic prowess. Through these varied lines of reasoning, the author proves that natural biological variation amongst peoples cannot be used to presuppose or validate any notion that certain groups of people have innate superiority in sports or sporting events.

The third selected article, “Idealism in Yogācāra Buddhism,” discusses a new trend to classify Yogācāra Buddhism as phenomenology rather than idealism. The paper
seeks to put to rest the debate over the classification of Yogācāra Buddhism. The author show that arguments suggesting the classification of Yogācāra as phenomenology are flawed and that Yogācāra Buddhism is idealism.

The final selected article was “Singing the Story: Narrative Voice and the Old English Scop.” Among the more compelling puzzles in the study of literature in Old English is the societal structure of early Anglo-Saxon culture; one potential key to this conundrum is the ubiquitous figure of the court harper, bard, or scop. This essay investigates three literary texts in which the scop figure plays a principle role. Through this careful examination of the scop in Beowulf, Deor, and Widsið, the author not only casts light on one societal figure, but also provides insight into the larger culture of which he was a part.

We are also pleased to include in this issue several pieces of art. They are the contribution of Brandon Bruce Dellario from School of Social Work, College of Health and Human Services.

We finally call for our graduate students to participate actively in the Hilltop Review. We think that the experience in producing an issue of the journal is worth investing their time. We are in need for a new editor, associate editors, reviewers and authors.

Editor
Lotfi Ben Othmane