

From the Editor

Sean Woodard

In today's fast-paced world, it can be difficult to focus on what's important. Whether we're reeling from news of human tragedy, combating misinformation on social media, or letting a car merge in front of us on the freeway, we are tasked with determining how to spend our energies. Even the most mundane tasks take a toll on us, mentally and physically. In choosing what's important to us, we make a conscious decision to allow ourselves some grace. Grace to take a breather. Grace to treat ourselves to an ice cream. Grace to grow as people.

To grow as a person takes time and effort. It involves no less than the will to educate yourself and the personal resolve to improve yourself. Informing both of these aspects is that of imagination.

Speaking with UTA President Jennifer Cowley for the 2023-2024 Maverick Speaker Series, former *Reading Rainbow* host and literacy advocate LeVar Burton described imagination as a superpower that allows anyone to see themselves at any point in time—past, present, and future. Such is the power of imagination that it helps us understand who we are and our place in the world.

Once we imagine where we stand, we can also extend some of the grace we grant ourselves to others. This often manifests through expressing compassion and empathy. It's more than simply imagining ourselves in other people's shoes. It's a form of humility that asks us how we can better understand and help one another.

Growing up, I watched a lot of PBS programming including *Reading Rainbow*, but primarily *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. The late Fred Rogers helped me—as well as countless other children from multiple generations—feel seen and better understand how to navigate the emotions I had growing up. We may not understand everything as children, but Rogers' patience with us, even from behind a television screen, showed how dedicated he was to reaching us. From everyday occurrences like getting a haircut or learning how to process anger, Rogers was there for us. He also contextualized world events in a way that helped us understand things while reminding us that there is hope and beauty in the world.

Granted, it is common to over-sentimentalize the impact of LeVar Burton or Fred Rogers in today's culture. But the hope, beauty, and grace they embodied continue to inspire us to be helpers in the world. These human qualities reflect more profoundly than instances of discord and hate that bombard us in an attempt to make us despair or forego connection with others.

The unifying theme for this Winter 2024 issue of *Global Insight* is "Reflected Worlds." Although there is much to criticize in the present, there is also much to be thankful for and to champion. Each of the contributors in this volume explore how these previously mentioned qualities appear in their research and extend beyond the academy to impact our understanding of the various issues in contemporary society.

When I joined the *Global Insight* editorial board in Fall 2023, the journal was in a state of transition. In many cases, we had to pool our resources together and build from scratch. But this process resulted in such wonderful collaborations that produced an issue I am very happy to share with readers.

I would like to thank the following people who helped make this issue a reality:

- Editor-in-Chief Dr. Lonny Harrison and Digital Publishing Librarian Vanessa Garrett for their insight and guidance in preparing this issue.
- *Global Insight*'s group of peer-reviewers—many of whom are UTA graduate students, alumni, and staff—for devoting their time to provide constructive feedback on student submissions.
- Drs. Amy Hodges and Timothy Ponce of the Department of English for fielding my technical questions relating to Adobe InDesign.
- All contributors in this issue, whose dedication to knowledge and improving the world will not only benefit them in their future respective fields, but also in being informed and compassionate global citizens.
- Our readers, whose support fuels our mission and shares our passion at *Global Insight*.

We are all the helpers who Fred Rogers instructs to look for in the world—by reflecting compassion, empathy, and grace in order to restore hope and beauty in a world we imagine for ourselves and future generations.

—Sean Woodard, Assistant Editor