



Editors' Introduction

KATIE McGETTIGAN AND WILL NORMAN

2022 saw transitions for both BAAS and the *Journal of American Studies*. In April, Dr. Cara Rodway completed her tenure as the twenty-first Chair of BAAS, having previously served three years as Treasurer; she was succeeded by Dr. Lydia Plath. Before stepping down, Cara delivered the first BAAS Chair's Address at the organization's 2022 conference in Hull. This event was BAAS's return to in-person gatherings for the first time since 2019, and its first attempt at a hybrid conference. In her address, Cara described BAAS's recent efforts to increase equality, diversity, and sustainability in its own activities and in the field as a whole. She also discussed the challenges of a present moment when American studies departments and programmes in the UK are closing, scattering scholars into the discipline's subfields, even as its interdisciplinarity fashions a unique and vital lens through which to view an increasingly globalized twenty-first century. We are delighted to publish this address in *JAS*, and we hope it will be the first of many opportunities for BAAS Chairs to share reflections on the state of the field and opportunities for future scholarship.

In December, Dr. Sinéad Moynihan and Dr. Nick Witham concluded their editorship of the *Journal of American Studies*. Steering *JAS* through the COVID-19 pandemic, they published and championed the highest-quality research in American studies even as barriers to conducting such research increased, especially for scholars outside the US; for those with limited access to research funds and library resources; and for those with disabilities, those with caring responsibilities, and those otherwise marginalized. Sinéad and Nick amplified marginalized voices within *JAS*, by increasing the presence of women and nonbinary scholars and of BIPOC scholars in the journal – as authors, reviewers, and board members. Their report on gender inequalities and academic publishing, co-authored with Dr. Maryam Jameela and published in 2021, excavated histories of women's involvement with the journal and examined how gender continues to inflect academic publishing today. In their attempts to diversify contributions to the journal, Sinéad and Nick collaborated with *JAS*'s Associate Editors, Dr. Zalfa Feghali and Dr. Ben Offler, who opened up the conversations taking place within what had

traditionally been known as the Reviews Section, and established new formats for scholarly reflection within this integral part of the journal.

As incoming coeditors, along with the new Associate Editors Dr. Nicole Gipson and Dr. Ahmed Honeini, we are grateful to the previous editorial team for leaving the journal in good health and for developing it as a venue within which scholars can critically access the power dynamics that shape American studies as a discipline, as well as the history, politics, literature, and culture of the United States. As an editorial team, we plan to continue their work, and to illustrate that diversifying the contributions to a journal – in terms of the topics addressed, the backgrounds of authors, and the format of contributions – can only aid its dissemination of rigorous and innovative scholarship. We are pleased to support new BAAS initiatives to develop the work of early-career researchers from historically underrepresented communities, and we are investigating ways to encourage contributions from scholars in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Central and South America. Nicole and Ahmed are introducing regular features that make space for early-career scholars, scholars outside academia, and creative professionals, recognizing that expertise in American studies is found in many different locations. While retaining peer-reviewed essays at the heart of the journal's output, we want *JAS* to have the flexibility to respond to contemporary events and to offer contributions in different media formats that address a general readership. Above all, we would like to ensure that *JAS* continues to show how interdisciplinary and capacious American studies scholarship illuminates the pasts, presents, and possible futures of the United States and beyond. We warmly invite submissions of articles, and suggestions for special issues, essay clusters, or roundtables that further these aims.