

Editorial Statement

With this special issue on ethnicity in America the *Journal of American Studies* completes its first quarter-century of publication. It is also my last as Editor.

Editors of the *Journal* are appointed for five years, renewable by mutual consent for a further five. I have chosen to stop after one term, because I served over three years as Associate Editor, and the time has come to make way for younger (and different) talent. My associate, Michael Heale, will succeed me as Editor, and Richard Gray of Essex University will take over as Associate Editor, with special responsibility for literature.

The *Journal's* first quarter-century paces almost exactly the growth of American studies in Great Britain. Its fortunes have shadowed the rise, the slight decline, and the renewed growth of the numbers of students, faculties and institutions in this country committed to the profession of American subjects. Since the mid-eighties the *Journal's* circulation, and the number of unsolicited manuscripts it receives, have been rising slowly but steadily, in an era when libraries everywhere have been cutting back on periodical subscriptions, and young lecturers and professors are having to turn more and more to book publication to secure their tenure.

Over the last five or six years the present editorial regime has established several important innovations. The “State of the Art” feature has been introduced to give readers a sense of recent developments in selected fields of the study of American history, literature and political and social institutions. “Notes and Comment” provides a forum for talking back to us and to our authors (a facility still under-used, we feel), and for setting out “single-case” analyses (for example, critical readings of single works of literature or of discrete historical events) that would not warrant full-sized articles in a journal needing to appeal to a wide constituency of Americanists in numerous disciplines. In addition, we have made increasing use of special issues, when good submissions in the same field have tended to cluster together, and when we have been able to invite additional material to fill out the number.

Finally, some thanks: to Michael Heale for his ideas, his unfailing help – both theoretical and practical – and his unruffled competence; to Deborah Madsen, whose copy editing and proof reading have continued

at their high level, uninterrupted by trivial matters such as childbirth and setting up Leicester University's first American literature programme; to the Cambridge University Press for their unstinting support and financial help, and for the quality of their printing and design; to our readers for their praise and constructive criticism; to our contributors, who, even when their submissions were turned down, often wrote with their thanks for the care we had given to their manuscripts; and above all to our reviewers, whose unremunerated discrimination has been the feature of the *Journal* most consistently praised by our readers.

STEPHEN FENDER