

# Note from the Editor-in-Chief

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NINA Y. MORGAN

This Summer/Fall 2020 issue of *JTAS* is published in the midst of great social distress as both Black Lives Matter and COVID-19 demonstrate the urgency of a transnational framework for analyzing and understanding what traditionally has been read in isolation or “nationally.”

As today’s issues of social (in)justice, public health, and political history resonate transnationally, they underscore the limits of simply asserting a binary opposition of national/transnational. Nevertheless, what the apparent parameters of nation may be and how they are implemented, instituted, and reproduced requires much investigation and theorization. When Nicole Waller (University of Potsdam) and Jens Temmen, a postdoctoral researcher at the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies (Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz), first proposed editing a Special Forum on the topic of “American Territorialities,” we had no idea that we would be publishing it at the same time news reports reveal that the Trump administration had, in 2017, considered selling Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria!<sup>1</sup> The very suggestion speaks volumes about the persistence of the rhetoric of empire, appropriation, and dispossession that transforms “settler” to “seller” without skipping a beat. The dynamics of sovereignty and the discourses that define places and spaces both geographic and juridical—whether land-based or oceanic—are central to the analyses in Temmen and Waller’s Special Forum featured in this issue. We are excited to bring you this diverse and timely collection of eight remarkable essays, accompanied by their Introduction and two excellent Afterwords, “What’s Law Got to Do With It?” by Lucy E. Salyer and Lila M. Teeters (University of New Hampshire), and “Militant Territoriality” by Vincent Brown (Harvard University).

This issue opens with a celebration of the winner of the American Studies Association’s newest award, named in honor of one of *JTAS*’s founding editors. The *Shelley Fisher Fishkin Prize for International Scholarship in Transnational American Studies* includes publication of an excerpt from the award-winning submission here in *JTAS*. *JTAS* congratulates 2019 winner David M. Struthers on his prizewinning monograph entitled *The World in a City: Multiethnic Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century Los Angeles*. We are grateful to the University of Illinois Press for giving *JTAS* permission to reprint a chapter.<sup>2</sup>

*JTAS* is also thrilled to announce that Brian Russell Roberts (BYU) has joined our team as the new *Reprise* Editor. Professor Roberts has contributed greatly to the field of American Studies, and his transnational and archipelagic approaches have been highly influential and

inspirational. He has also been an active contributor to every part of *JTAS*—as a coeditor of an outstanding Special Forum, as an author of essays, and as a scholar whose work has been featured in the journal’s *Forward* and *Reprise* sections. The whole team is excited to have him join the Editorial Board.

While we are facing the COVID-19 crisis, and as we attempt to analyze police brutality and social injustice transnationally, *JTAS* has commissioned two Special Forums which are scheduled to appear in our Winter/Spring issue due to be published at the end of 2020. Editorial Board member Kevin K. Gaines (University of Virginia) will edit a Special Forum on global protests resonant with the Black Lives Matter movement, with a particular focus on India, Indonesia, and the South Asian context. Senior Associate Managing Editor Aiko Takeuchi-Demirci (Koç University) will curate essays on how the global pandemic has impacted aspects of our discipline and practice. We are looking forward to the relevant insights both Special Forums will offer our readers in these turbulent times.

Teamwork is indispensable today. As graduate students and volunteers committed to Transnational American Studies join us in collaboration, *JTAS* benefits tremendously from their ideas and their energy. This year, we welcome Stanford doctoral candidate Cynthia Garcia to the team of associate managing editors. Our managing team, led by Managing Editor Sabine Kim also includes Senior Associate Managing Editor Selina Lai-Henderson (Duke Kunshan University) and Sabine Walter, a graduate student at Marburg University in Germany. *JTAS*’s managing side handles the technical aspects of our publishing process from submission to publication, and all of our managing editors and assistants are essential to getting this research to our global audience. We are deeply grateful to them all!

Finally, I’d like to thank the Editorial Board, Advisory Board, and all of the anonymous peer reviewers of *JTAS*, especially those unnamed experts who write rather amazing reviews, assisting our authors in the development of their research and revisions of their essays. This weighty contribution, anonymous and for the most part unacknowledged, is part of the essential work that shapes so much of what we publish here. You are sincerely appreciated.

*JTAS* Special Forum Editor Erika Doss keeps many projects afloat simultaneously. Essays grouped together on a theme, peer reviewed, and edited by guest editors who prepare a scholarly Introduction—and, in the case of this issue’s feature, “American Territorialities,” an additional two Afterwords—these Special Forums are a perfect addition to any American Studies course. This research is fresh, comprehensive, and often pathbreaking. Our analytics show that tens of thousands of readers worldwide download or view essays published in *JTAS* every year. If you have a proposal for guest editing a special forum, please contact Erika Doss directly (edoss@nd.edu).

As always, the *JTAS* team welcomes you. Thank you for your interest in Transnational American Studies!

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Numerous news agencies and outlets in July 2020 (including CNN and *The New York Times*) have reported this story, some observing a connection to colonialism. See Julia Conley, “Adding Insult to the ‘Injury of Colonialism,’ Trump Suggested Selling Puerto Rico After Hurricane Maria, Former Advisor Says,” *Common Dreams*, July 12, 2020, <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2020/07/12/adding-insult-injury-colonialism-trump-suggested-selling-puerto-rico-after-hurricane>.

<sup>2</sup> Although the prize is awarded at the American Studies Association annual conference’s International Partnership Luncheon—cohosted by the ASA International Committee which adjudicates and cosponsors the prize—*JTAS* will publish an excerpt from the winner’s submission in the Summer/Fall issue appearing the year after the prize is awarded.