

Editor's Note

Friends warn that you can't go home again, philosophers that you can't step in the same river twice. Yet decades after I first worked in the *AJS* office—as clerk for the book review, member of the book review board, and then a graduate student associate editor—it is striking how some things remain the same. The reminders for late reviews no longer go out by regular mail on that form with the hand-drawn snail, and the first databases that were then being introduced are now long decommissioned. But what endures is the taste for innovative work, the space for major empirical contributions, and the journal's capacious understanding of the discipline in terms of both interests and location in the world.

As I have stepped into the role of editor, the obvious challenge is to maintain the virtues and traditions of *AJS* as well as to find opportunities in the changes we confront. In this effort, I am enormously grateful to the community of reviewers who offer both detailed analysis and constructive critique so consistently. However impressive papers are when they first arrive electronically, they become even better through this deep and generous engagement by our referees. From this vantage point, it is also clear how much the discipline benefits from its rich ecology of journals, each with different if overlapping missions.

We are also challenged by the insistent acceleration of publication, both within and outside the academy. Over the past year, the editorial board and staff have looked carefully at our processes, finding ways to streamline some steps and to avoid delays while remembering that what matters in the end is the quality of the published work rather than maximum speed. In the rapidly changing world of academic publishing, we are wrestling with transformations in the economic and technical organization of scholarship as well as new possibilities to connect with broader publics. These include changes in book review. Many publishers no longer automatically send out copies for review, so check with your editor that your book has been sent to *AJS*.

As I begin my second year as editor, my thanks go to our amazing staff: Susan Allan, Sharon Brinkman, and Sandra Melnyczenko. The editorial work would be impossible without the many contributions from our consulting editors, the Chicago department faculty, Forrest Stuart as book review editor, the graduate student members of the manuscript board and book review, and the associate editors who have gathered every Wednesday morning this past year: Cheol-Sung Lee, Jane McCamant, Alicia Riley, Xi Song, and Jenny Trinitapoli. Xi and Jenny will return for the coming year to be joined by Kimberly Hoang and John Levi Martin along with our new graduate student associate editors, Alessandra Lembo and Yaniv Ron-El. Above all,

I am deeply grateful to Andy Abbott for his extraordinary stewardship of the journal for the past 15 years.

Elisabeth S. Clemens

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