



REVIEW: *AMERICAN STUDIES JOURNAL* #68 2019

DANIEL BUSTILLO
INSTITUTO FRANKLIN–UAH

We know you hate your quarantine and how it feels. We also know that keeping your mind busy is probably the best way to spend these days locked at home. Good news! To make your lockdown more pleasant, we are bringing you our review on issue 68 of the *American Studies Journal* (ASJ). The very origins of this journal trace back to the Germany of the early 1960s, in the middle of a Cold War between the two most formidable global powers of the time: the USA and the URSS. Focused on essays related German-Americans and American Studies at first, ASJ variety of topics soon evolved as it began to attract readers throughout the world. The current result is an English peer-reviewed, open-access journal with a simple purpose: to provide a forum for intellectual debate about all aspects of social, cultural, and political life in the United States of America. The journal is based at the German University of Göttingen.

ASJ devotes its 68th issue to the approach of US social movements and race/ethnicity from a French perspective, under the title *Distance Matters*. In this volume, ASJ tries to assess the specific challenges a non-US-based scholar has to face when analysing both social movements and race/ethnicity in the United States. To shed light on this matter, this issue has been designed as a symposium in which eleven French-based specialists of various fields of study offer their experiences and insights on issues concerning to non-US-based American studies scholars: distance, objectivity, engagement, challenges, epistemological and methodological positioning, etc. By giving voice to non-US-based-scholars, ASJ attempts to offer a fresh new form of built-in objectivity that is conducive to fresh insights on American society, as well as uncover new approaches on themes, issues, structures, demographics, or dynamics that might tend to remain blind spots for academics based in the US.

The issue is divided in two parts. In the first one, we are presenting six academic essays on different topics ranging from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. The first two articles, by H el ene Quanquin and Claire Delahaye respectively, deal with the complex interpolations of past feminists movements in subsequent political disputes,



as well as the methodological issues these raise for scholars of American feminisms. Next, Marie Gayte and Marion Douzou discuss the methodological apparatus that helps scholars working on conservative movements stay aside of the ideological implications of these, avoiding subsequent potential patterns of stigmatization and fascination. Last for this first part, Audrey Célestine and Nicolas Martin-Breteau, as well as Charlotte Thomas Hébert analyse how their respective backgrounds and past experiences with their research inform their methodologies.

The second part of the special issue is represented by a kind of symposium, consisting in an open-ended discussion on fieldwork among scholars working on a variety of racial and ethnic groups. For this occasion, ASJ has invited Mathieu Bonzom, Rim Latrache, Caroline Laurent, and Yohann Le Moigne. Together, they debate on several aspects of their fieldworks, as how they got to work on them, their challenges and rewards, and the boundaries they have to respect as outsiders.

All in all, this issue 68 of ASJ presents an exceptional opportunity for young non-US-based scholars to understand better not only on the challenges and problems that may arise dealing with their research, but also on the new approaches and contributions they can make on their field of American studies. Therefore, I highly recommend it for those of you who may feel uncomfortable at doing research on American Studies due to reasons of distance, culture, politics, and whatnot.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE

2019. *American Studies Journal* 68: *Distance Matters*. <http://www.asjournal.org/68-2019/>.

SUGGESTED CITATION: Bustillo, Daniel. 2020. Review of *Distance Matters*, *American Studies Journal* 68. *PopMeC Research Blog*. Published May 22, 2020.