

Former Editors' Reflections

Celebrating Thirty Years of *JAST*

Meltem Kiran-Raw (for Laurence Raw, editor-in-chief, 2012-2016)

Dr. Laurence Raw, my late colleague and husband, became the editor of *JAST* in the summer of 2012. Although I remained only an outside observer, I was aware that he started out by establishing certain priorities. First, like his predecessors, he wanted *JAST* to maintain high academic standards. Second, again like his predecessors, he wanted the journal to fulfill the eligibility criteria for inclusion in prestigious databases. Third, he aimed to recruit as many scholars as possible—both in Turkey and abroad—to reinforce the journal's visibility in the transcultural and transnational dialogue in American Studies. And lastly, he wanted *JAST* to provide a welcoming publication venue for colleagues at the beginning of their careers.

The task at hand necessitated immediate and collaborative action. Several previous issues awaited publication. The website needed to be redesigned. Publicity material had to be prepared and distributed. Academicians, all with heavy workloads of their own, had to be contacted, asked for special favors, and reminded of deadlines. Younger scholars needed to be encouraged to write reviews and submit articles.

Thankfully, Dr. Raw had—and during the process met—many colleagues who were as determined as he was to contribute their best to *JAST*. Hence the many board meetings, the numerous phone calls, the multitudinous chats, and the unconscionable number of email messages. I will never know what kept Dr. Raw's colleagues going, but in his case, those truckloads of tea delivered to the office at Başkent University and to the study at home must surely have helped. Add lashings of milk and enthusiasm, keep sipping as you plow through the maze that is your inbox, and lo and behold! Numbers 32 to 42, from Fall 2010 to Fall 2015, each leafed through with pride and joy as it came off the press. Not to mention the material already lined up for the upcoming issues...

But all good things must come to an end, as the saying goes. Dr. Raw would have gladly served beyond the spring of 2016 as editor of *JAST*, had it not been for the fact that he had to live with an illness that kept recurring and—more annoyingly for him—a wife that fretted over the strain his commitments put on his health. Still, he was content to turn the job over to another colleague, whom he trusted would work as hard as he did towards making the journal more and more inspirational in the field of American Studies.

Today, *JAST* boasts an amazing editorial board and publishing board, many members of which are academicians Dr. Raw worked with. He would have been especially proud to see that some of them are indeed the up-and-coming scholars of his day. "Look, Meltem," he would have said, "our young ones are now at the helm." A well-established journal celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, *JAST* was and is in safe hands.

Özlem Uzundemir, editor-in-chief, 2016-2020

The publication of academic journals in Turkey poses numerous challenges, especially when the editorial work is undertaken by academics trying to balance research, teaching, and administrative duties. My editorial journey with the *Journal of American Studies of Turkey (JAST)* began in 2012. During a board meeting of the American Studies Association of Turkey (ASAT), the president of the board, Meldan Tanrısal, asked me to become the editor, following in the footsteps of Nur Gökalp Akkerman and Barış Gümüüşbaş. Taking on this responsibility was both an honor and a formidable undertaking, as the journal had built a reputation as a respected medium for scholarship in American Studies since its founding in 1995.

Lacking experience in journal publishing at the time, I proposed collaborating with my valued colleague Laurence Raw, who had a large academic network and expertise in journal publication. Together with Laurence and Berkem Sağlam, we tried to broaden the journal's scope and move it in "a more transdisciplinary direction . . . examining the idea of 'America,' and how it continues to shape our lives, irrespective of where we might reside" (Raw 4). Laurence's diligent work in curating calls for papers enabled us to engage with a scholarly community within Turkey and internationally. Between numbers 32 to 42, we published both general and themed volumes on "Adaptation," "Gore Vidal," "Transnational Feminisms," "Henry James," and "Transnational Latin Studies." This period marked a dynamic phase in the journal's development, characterized by a diversity of academic contributions and critical perspectives.

After collaborating with Gordon Marshall for the following three issues, Berkem and I carried forward the editorial responsibilities until 2020, with general as well as themed issues, addressing subjects such as "F. Scott Fitzgerald," "Richard Nixon and Public Memory," "Amiri Baraka," "Travel Writing," and "Native American Studies."

A milestone in *JAST*'s history was its inclusion in the ULAKBİM index in 2017, an achievement made possible through the efforts of the editorial team and the support of ASAT board members. This recognition affected the journal's academic standing and broadened its visibility in academic circles.

My decade-long involvement with *JAST* has been a deeply rewarding professional experience. The process of coordinating publication schedules, managing peer reviews, and refining each issue through meticulous revision with Berkem Sağlam has been accompanied by invaluable collaborations and intellectual enrichment. I would like to thank Meldan Tanrısal and Tanfer Emin Tunç for their unwavering support. I would especially like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Laurence and Berkem, whose partnership and editorial insight were instrumental throughout this journey.

Long live *JAST*!

Work Cited

Raw, Laurence. "Editorial Introduction: Forging New Collaborations." *Journal of American Studies of Turkey*, no. 32, 2012, pp. 1-8.

Defne Tutan, editor-in-chief, 2020-2023

I had the privilege of serving as the editor-in-chief of *JAST* from 2020 to 2023, administering the publication of 8 numbers, namely 53 (Spring 2020) through 60 (Fall 2023). I recall writing a brief editorial for number 55, in which I reflected on “the troubling times and the urgency to adapt” while the pandemic was still ongoing. Though I still believe that the skill to adapt is of utmost significance at present, I would like to add persistence and resilience to the list of vital skills. The 30th anniversary of the initiation of *JAST*’s publication—the sole academic journal for American Studies in Turkey, attests to both persistence and resilience at their finest. *JAST* has its roots in a spirit of humility, yet has reached worldwide renown; it is a beacon that has stood the test of time—and of the pandemic, natural disasters, bureaucratic crises—yet has always signified heritage, devotion, motivation, and passion. Had it not been for the collective and cumulative efforts of everyone associated with *JAST*, as well as the broader network of the American Studies Association of Turkey—the single firm-standing professional association for the field, such a historic beacon could never have persevered. I would like to express my endless gratitude to and constant appreciation of those who preceded us with the hope that we have served well in passing the torch onto those who succeed us. May such invaluable efforts always receive their worth.

