

Statement from *American Literature* in Support of Black Lives Matter

The editors and editorial board of *American Literature* join with the protesters in the United States and across the world whose collective voices are calling for long-overdue measures to address systemic racism, anti-Black violence, and white supremacy. We are saddened and outraged by the recent murders of George Perry Floyd Jr., Rayshard Brooks, Jamel Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black men and women who have been systematically murdered by the police or whose murders, as in the case of Ahmaud Arbery, the legal system initially deemed unworthy to prosecute. We stand in solidarity with those who are calling for an end to racism in all its forms.

The pandemic has made clear—once more—how deeply racism has permeated every aspect of US society with the undeniably disproportionate health and economic impacts experienced by Black, Latinx, and Indigenous populations, and with many Asian Americans singled out for racial harassment and violence. Recognizing that racism is foundational to the structures and institutions of the modern world, we firmly believe that addressing racism will inevitably lay bare the way inequity and injustice of all kinds have been normalized. Such work will allow us to begin to dismantle a broken system and start the process of building a more just society. This process must be a widespread collective effort, and those who have long benefited from white privilege must be prepared to learn from those for whom recognizing institutional racism and structural violence has not been an academic exercise but a way of life.

Recognizing that bias finds expression in many ways, *American Literature* acknowledges its past complicity in the discipline's history of racism and remains committed to continuing to heighten awareness about racism's explicit and implicit manifestations. To this end, *American Literature* plans to update the materials we send to new board members to include increased attention to citational practices and to alternative scholarly modes beyond the traditional scholarly essay as two such areas. We would like to institute an anonymous survey for authors that will show us where we need to work harder to recruit authors from diverse backgrounds of all kinds. We welcome suggestions for improvement of all of our practices, and we plan to establish an annual virtual board meeting to address areas in which we can improve all aspects of the journal, with particular attention to equity and inclusivity.