From the Review Editor

As I near the end of my term as Review Essay Editor, it seems an appropriate juncture to publicize in some detail the ways in which review essays emerge into the pages of *Law & Society Review*. I see the work of review essays in this journal as twofold. First, they offer to our readers an overview and analysis of questions and concepts significant to a variety of subfields and modes of inquiry in sociolegal studies. Second, they expose our readers to new and major texts in the field. In emphasizing those two goals, I imagine our book review section not to provide a comprehensive overview of all relevant new work, but rather to offer critical engagement with major and emerging ideas of potential importance to the field. This selective approach has a cost: we cannot even begin to give proper notice to the large number of excellent sociolegal books published in any given year. We hope that the quality and depth of the reviews we do offer our readers in the end compensate for the lack of a broad-brush, list-oriented approach to book reviews adopted by some other journals.

As a general matter, I obtain these in-depth review essays in two ways. Most commonly, I commission essays on particular subjects or books from scholars whose expertise intersects in what I hope will be exciting and insightful ways with the particular subjects of the imagined review. I also warmly welcome conversations with those of you who may wish to write a review essay. Occasionally I receive a completed essay for consideration, but as a general matter I prefer to engage in some preliminary conversation so that potential reviewers have a clear sense of the kinds of content and critical strategy, as well as the kinds of texts, most likely to see their way to publication in *LSR*. Typically, once a review has been commissioned, the author and I agree on a tentative deadline for receipt of a draft that, once in hand, I read carefully and return with comment. The author and I discuss those comments, and after the review takes its final shape I forward it to the *LSR* office for copyediting by a second editor and, finally, publication.

In upcoming issues, we plan to have review essays on several recent works dealing with (among other subjects) law and social identity; law, culture, and wilderness; the legal history of colonial-

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ism; law and popular culture; and the growth of "government by judiciary." On behalf of the incoming Review Essay Editor, Elizabeth Heger Boyle, I warmly encourage suggestions from members of the Association both about books or fields to review and about potential reviewers, be they established law and society scholars or younger colleagues making their way into the field.

Martha Merrill Umphrey

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