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Editors Introduction

James D Boys, Co-Editor, 49th Parallel

This is a very special edition of the 49th Parallel, dedicated to a very special event. In May 2004 the University of Birmingham and Padua University held a multi disciplinary conference dedicated to the exploration of the United States, its policies, literature and arts in general.

Held in the historical setting of Padua, Italy, the conference brought together some of the best minds, both young and not so young, to examine concepts of Americana from a wide range of perspectives. Some of those delivering papers may well be familiar to regular readers of the *49th Parallel*: Scott Lucas, Head of Department here at Birmingham; Kaeten Mistry, former undergraduate and now a member of the post graduate community here at Birmingham; Michael Burns, a graduate of Georgetown University and now a prominent member of Birmingham's post graduate community, soon set to deliver his second film, *Pre-emptive Warriors* on an expectant world!

Others will be less familiar, coming as so many do from the community of students at Padua University. However with the ever growing ties between the two institutions I have no doubt that many will become familiar to readers of the 49th Parallel over the coming months and years.

I hope that you enjoy this special edition of the 49th Parallel, which closes out the academic year of 2003/2004. The year ahead promises great things here in the Department of American and Canadian Studies, with new faces and new ideas. The changes will no doubt be felt here at the 49th Parallel, which I am sure will only go on to bigger and better things during 2004/2005.

James D. Boys