

Foreword

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Approaching its ten-year anniversary, *aspeers*'s editing cycle continues to be marked by continuity and change. Once more, MA students from around Europe have graciously sent in their best work for review; once more, a fine cohort of student editors at Leipzig has pored over these submissions, identifying, in extended discussions, the strongest, most promising potential contributions. Once more, this critical review marked the beginning of a sustained dialog with the ideas and arguments in all these papers, as well as with the authors of the pieces selected, a dialog meant to make every contribution be the best it can. Once more, these texts thus served as a conversation starter of sorts for the kind of intellectual exchange that is academia, and once more, this exchange was capped by laborious days and hours of line editing and resulted in a new print issue shipped to authors and to libraries, and available in a digital online version worldwide.

Despite all these continuities, every editing cycle comes with its own rewards and challenges, each triggers its own set of questions. This year, many of the hardest questions seemed to be around matters of disciplinarity and *aspeers*'s mission as a graduate journal. In a previous issue, we already commented on the ambivalences involved: as a graduate journal, *aspeers* naturally, and rightfully, invites a particular diversity of academic styles and voices, a diversity that may mark European American studies generally but that is particularly pronounced with our authors having undergone fewer years of the 'disciplining' that usually comes with an academic career in any given field. As with the 2010 issue, the student editors thus had to face "difficult discussions on how much homogeneity a journal for young scholars in American studies should enforce and how much diversity of styles it should celebrate" (iv). As teachers, and as moderators in the editorial process, seeing the seriousness and rigor with which the editors tackled this question was a remarkable experience.

There are other transitions and other challenges down the road, of course. Only a minor formality at first glance, the ninth issue of *aspeers* will, in all likelihood, be the last one to be edited according to the seventh edition of the MLA style. The Modern

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Language Association has just released a new version, and future editors will have to adhere to this. The changeover is worth noting not only because it points to the journal's relative age—after all, we started out with the sixth edition. It also serves as a reminder how much, in academic writing, matters of form speak of larger stakes involved: When *aspeers* transitioned to MLA seven, the first version of MLA style to include the medium of publication, many of our submitters routinely followed the request to denote this medium simply by appending “Print” to every entry, forcing the editors to go through extended checks to see if the respective publication was available in print at all and whether it was plausible that it had, in fact, been accessed thus. This tendency to denote even online publications as ‘print,’ in our eyes, pointed to the higher standing attributed to print publications at the time. Over the last few years, however, authors have increasingly begun to list online sources as such, and this development might testify to a more nuanced appreciation of the various publication media taking hold. It will be interesting to see what changes MLA eight brings, and to speculate what these changes and their sustained rejection or gradual acceptance can tell us about American studies as a field.

Other changes are on the horizon as well, with institutional transformations at American Studies Leipzig under way, and with *aspeers* remaining an ever-changing project, depending each year anew on the willingness of dozens and dozens of American studies students across Europe to submit themselves and their work to the editorial process, and with the dedication and the enthusiasm of a new team of editors keeping the process alive and thriving. The past nine years have not only underscored that American studies in Europe needs and can sustain a graduate-level journal; they also testify to the ruggedness of a process that keeps reinventing itself each year because each year a new group of students agrees to expand enormous energies for one shared goal: the publication of a new issue of *aspeers*.

Works Cited

Koenen, Anne, and Sebastian M. Herrmann. “Foreword.” Ed. Ines Krug et al. *aspeers: emerging voices in american studies* 3 (2010): iii - v. Print.