

Foreword

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With this eleventh issue, *aspeers* continues its remarkable journey into a new decade, and that sentence alone gives testament to the success of its mission. From its first year on, *aspeers* worked on the assumption that American studies, a small but innovative and energetic field, would produce enough excellent, publishable scholarship written by graduate students in Europe alone to justify an annual journal. But the assumption was always a gamble, and one that almost every foreword kept belaboring, signaling that the journal's ongoing success was a matter not just of confidence but also of concern—at least for the longest time.

Carrying the journal over the finish line of its first decade, head editor Stefan Schubert accordingly announced that the question that had been with the journal from its first issue on, the question of whether graduate students in the field would produce enough publishable work and whether the interest in such its publication would be enough to sustain a journal, could now be “confidently answered in the positive: There still is clear and strong demand for a publication dedicated to showcasing the best of graduate-level American studies scholarship in Europe as well as for the dialogue and exchange it engenders” (iv). While this ongoing success thus gives evidence of the productivity of American studies' young scholars, it also speaks eloquently of *aspeers*'s ability to keep evolving and experimenting. As Schubert notes, “variations and evolutions” are one of the “constants” of the project, and indeed this first issue of the second decade contains a number of innovations, a number of firsts.

For the first time, this editing cycle of *aspeers* was taught in a team-teaching arrangement, a format that proved particularly fitting for such a collaborative, project-driven setting, and that seems to have allowed the student group to take ownership of the publishing process in particularly assertive, productive, and

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welcome a fashion. If possible, it is a format that should be continued and that shows great promise. This eleventh issue of *aspeers* also contains the first professorial voice section contributed by a US scholar, a choice that the editorial team explains in more detail in the introduction. This issue also is the first to feature an all-female cast of authors, a coincidence that only became clear after the double blind review process had ended, but a fitting coincidence in a year that saw the Women's March in Washington, the #metoo hashtag, and the first woman joining for the head-editing of the journal. It is also the first issue that only contains topical contributions (ever since *aspeers* began organizing its issues around both a topical section and a selection of nontopical papers with the journal's fourth issue). Again, this selection is somewhat coincidental—not all papers the editors allow for a resubmission come back—but it also speaks to the enormous inclusivity of this year's topic: After all, which paper in American studies is not also a paper about “Alternative Americas”?

But there are even more innovations: In a show of remarkable energy, the editorial team, having finished the selection, editing, line-editing, and layouting of the issue, and having mastered the project's final session, unflinchingly went back to the drawing board for two important visual alterations. Seeing the new decade as a rare opportunity to introduce (comparatively) radical changes, they decided to give the journal a new font and to propose a new color for the spine. With its yellow marking, the second decade of *aspeers* is now set off from the first one on the shelves. Changing this now, the students argued, would make it possible to mark each decade with its own color. Another sentence that, all by itself, speaks legion.

Of course, the fearful question that has stayed with *aspeers* for its first ten years does not simply go away: Will the field continue to sustain a graduate journal drawing its submissions from such a small group of authors: graduate students of American studies in Europe? Will there always be instructors and students willing and able to shoulder the enormous work that comes with the project? Will there always be an audience for the work we publish? But these questions might also miss the point: Whether or not there will be a third color on the spines of *aspeers*, and whether or not we will still print the journal on paper ten years down the line, the mere fact that the students imagine parceling off decades shows something else: By its sheer existence, and by its continuing existence, *aspeers* encourages students in American studies to imagine a future in which students continue to produce publishable scholarship, and in which other students continue to put in countless

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hours in order to publish this scholarship—and that, indeed, is something remarkable.

WORKS CITED

Schubert, Stefan. Foreword. *aspeers: emerging voices in american studies*, vol. 10, 2017, pp. iii-vi. www.aspeers.com/2017/foreword.