

Editorial

The current—and first!—issue of COPAS emerged from a Post Graduate Forum (PGF) at the University of Regensburg, Nov 12 to 14, 1999. The conference was opened with a session that tried to measure up the divergent positions in the discussion of postmodernism in current Literary and Cultural Studies. The contributions ranged from stressing aspects of commercialization in current postmodern discourse to the ethics of postmodernist narrative.

The second session addressed historical issues: It comprised presentations on reform movements in medical social work around the turn of the century and on the destinies of German and Jewish immigrants to the United States during the first half of the 20th century. The following session with two lectures on individual constructions of history through storytelling provided a link to the fourth session's focus on Literary Studies. The contributions discussed the literary representation of 19th-century popular culture, the narrative construction of and by women struggling between the private and the public spheres, and the mediation of nature in the writings of Thoreau and Austin.

The final workshop investigated the political culture of the revolutionary era, particularly the public discourse about the constitution of Pennsylvania and the perception of slavery by female British abolitionists and members of the early women's movement. The conference was concluded with a talk on the diplomatic history concerning the aims and problems of American foreign policy in the period prior to the Vietnam War and an introduction to the corpus-linguistic research project BLUR (*Blues Lyrics Collected at the University of Regensburg*).

COPAS, like the PGF, is devoted to an active scholarly exchange between contributors and their audiences. We, the editors, therefore encourage readers of COPAS to state their opinions on single contributions and thus help to make the journal a lively forum for exchange. We welcome suggestions on how to improve this "ongoing work in progress." The editors of COPAS emphatically thank the Bavarian American Academy (BAA) for the realization of this pilot project—the first of its kind in Germany. Without its generous support, COPAS would not have been possible