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Abstract: This editors' note launches the first peer-reviewed Black Studies online journal founded in Europe, *Black Studies Papers*, and introduces its first issue, entitled *Slavery Revisited*.

Keywords: *Black Studies Papers*, *Beloved*, Black Studies, digital publishing

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Editors' Note

Carsten Junker and Marie-Luise Löffler

We are very pleased to launch *Black Studies Papers*—the first peer-reviewed Black Studies journal founded in Europe—with our first issue, entitled *Slavery Revisited*. The idea for *BSP* goes back to 2012, when we started to develop the conceptual framework for a scholarly online journal that seeks to provide a vital platform for the diverse—and frequently opposed—approaches and voices within Black Studies.

Precisely this kind of vital and at times antagonistic scholarly exchange took place at a symposium in Nantes, France, on 16–17 March 2012, which focused on “Writing Slavery After *Beloved*” —both in outstanding talks and lively discussions twenty-five years after the publication of Toni Morrison’s novel. We have the great honor to hereby publish both various essays that came out the conference, as well as further contributions that open up the field of inquiry set by the conference in Nantes.

Not only do the articles included in this first issue cover a wide range of genres and media, theoretical approaches and methodologies, but in addressing questions pertaining to slavery, they insist on historicizing sociocultural and diasporic practices and hegemonies of modernity and postmodernity while also exposing connections and disconnections across locales, generations, cultural expressions, and social divides. As these essays variously show, a text such as *Beloved* can perform cultural work in highly diverse and far-reaching directions. In so doing, the contributions mobilize the thematic, temporal and spatial parameters of the journal in exemplary and oftentimes unexpected fashions.

Moreover, as these papers are written by both newly emerging as well as well-established scholars coming from and working against diverse scholarly backgrounds, they enter into and shape an international dialogue in the broad field of Black Studies. Thus, this first issue of *Black Studies Papers* reflects and promotes multidisciplinary and transnational perspectives on Black diasporic cultural formations. Considering the fact that all work in the field of Black Studies is informed by the ways in

which we are racialized and socially positioned, *Black Studies Papers* seeks to reflect the epistemic implications of this reality.

In general, we strongly believe that the web-based format of *Black Studies Papers* provides ideal conditions for fostering lively scholarly debates. As an online journal, we seek to make use of the opportunities afforded by the new digital technologies of publishing, not least because they hold the promise of overcoming the financial and bureaucratic constraints that more traditional modes of publishing impose on the circulation of ideas and knowledge.

With contributions covering periods ranging from before transatlantic enslavement to the present day, discussing a wide variety of topics by utilizing numerous methodological angles and approaches, and considering various current theories and concepts such as post-racialism and Afro-pessimism, we hereby introduce *Black Studies Papers* as a vital platform, both in Europe and the Americas, with which we hope to reflect and foster the very vibrancy, complexity and broad range of the field of Black Studies itself.

The symposium "Writing Slavery after *Beloved*" took place with the support of the University of Nantes, its Centre de Recherches sur les Identités Nationales et l'Interculturalité (CRINI), the University of Bremen, and the Collegium for African American Research (CAAR).