



## CALL FOR PAPERS: “AMERICAN CONSPIRACIES”

*aspeers: emerging voices in american studies*  
Call for Submissions by October 15, 2023

From the Kennedy assassination to the moon landing hoax and QAnon, the United States have witnessed myriad conspiracy theories throughout their history. While the US is, of course, not alone in its love for conspiracies, conspiratorial rhetoric and conspiracy theories have been a fixture of US culture and politics for over two centuries. But even to this day, conspiracy theories are evoked both seriously and humorously from the political realm to popular culture, shaping public discourse and challenging established narratives. Although many of the more outlandish conspiracy theories have never gained traction in wider parts of the populace outside of jokes and memes, the US also had its fair share of widespread conspiratorial thinking such as during the Roswell UFO incident or the Red Scare of the 1950s, which captivated the collective imagination and spurred an intense debate observable in all kinds of cultural artifacts from sci-fi movies to postmodernist novels.

However, while conspiracy theories keep fascinating the public with their intricate narratives, actual US conspiracies have occurred throughout history—concrete instances of hidden agendas, covert collaborations, and abuses of power. Examples of US conspiracies can be found in politics, business, and larger social spheres. Political scandals such as Watergate or the Cambridge Analytica data breach have revealed covert operations to manipulate public opinion, compromise privacy, and influence electoral processes. Social conspiracies emerged from systemic injustices, discrimination, and abuses of power, as exemplified by the Tuskegee Experiment or government-sanctioned surveillance programs that infringe upon privacy rights in the name of national security. These instances highlight the manipulation and victimization of marginalized communities by those in positions of authority.

For its seventeenth issue, *aspeers* dedicates its topical section to “**American Conspiracies**” and invites European graduate students to critically and analytically explore US literature, (popular) culture, history, politics, society, and media through the lens of ‘conspiracy.’ We welcome papers from all disciplines, methodologies, and approaches comprising American studies and related fields. Potential papers could cover (but are not limited to):

- Representations, narratives, or images of conspiracies/conspiracy theories in US literature, film, TV, etc.
- Conspiracy and ‘paranoia’ as a methodology (or epistemology) in literary and cultural studies (paranoid/symptomatic reading and its critique, etc.)
- Analyses related to current and past social and political conspiracies/conspiracy theories
- Historical conceptualizations of covert operations or hidden agendas in the US and in a transnational context, in particular as tied to questions of power, identity, control, or rulership
- Hoaxes, cons, ‘plots,’ moral panics, and other related phenomena in American history, media, and culture
- The intersections of conspiracies and conspiracy theories with categories like race, class, age, and gender

*aspeers*, the first and currently only graduate-level peer-reviewed print journal of European American studies, encourages fellow MA students from all fields to reflect on the diverse meanings of “American Conspiracies.” We welcome term papers, excerpts from theses, or papers specifically written for the seventeenth issue of *aspeers* by **October 15, 2023**. If you seek to publish work beyond this topic, please refer to our general Call for Papers. Please consult our submission guidelines and find some additional tips at [www.aspeers.com/2024](http://www.aspeers.com/2024).