



## CALL FOR PAPERS: "AMERICAN MEMORIES"

*aspeers: emerging voices in american studies*  
Call for Submissions by 31 October 2012

"Never forget." Shortly after the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, this phrase, along with pictures of the Twin Towers set against the backdrop of an American flag, appeared on T-shirts, coffee mugs, mouse pads, and a whole host of other marketable goods. In many ways, these cultural artifacts and their treatment showcase the intricate interweaving of such concepts as nationalism, identity, trauma, narrative, and consumer culture within the complex of "American Memories." In fact, fueled in part by innovations in such diverse fields as historiography, neuropsychology, museum studies, and political science, the number of panels, conferences, seminars, as well as articles and books published on different notions of memory has seen a rise in American studies and other fields in recent years: 'Memory' has become one of the buzzwords in the humanities and social sciences. *aspeers* 6 (2013) seeks to collect and present the best MA-level work on the topic of "American Memories."

Concepts and performances of memories and related concepts such as remembering, forgetting, nostalgia, and trauma provide for a wide variety of approaches. Analyses span the field from history and social sciences to literary and cultural studies, psychology and philosophy, media and film studies, geography, the arts, and others. The sixth issue of *aspeers*, then, offers unique opportunities for critical thought and analysis in these areas, but also specifically for interdisciplinary inquiries.

Memories, whether passed on from relatives or evoked in the public sphere, perform crucial cultural work and have tremendous social significance. They play and have played a pivotal role in defining American identities. Creating and maintaining collective memories is a question of political and discursive power, an exercise in ideology. This process is essential in nation building, constructing oppositions and animosities, creating heroes, villains, and myths. Personal, communal, and national identities are shaped by what official history writing and other discourses about the meaning of the past choose to emphasize. Marginalized groups, in fact, have often framed their struggles for equality as one of correcting omissions in national narratives, of insisting on rewriting national memories.

For the social sciences, the topic of "American Memories" provides particularly fertile grounds for research. History writing at large, of course, offers a huge arena for constant interrogation and renegotiation of processes, constructions, and performances of remembering and forgetting. Moreover, arguments about what constitutes the proper approach to dealing with memories are omnipresent, ranging from politicized debates about monuments to widespread anxieties about digital memory and its consequences for privacy and data protection policies.

As a medium of storytelling, literature, in the broadest sense, creates particularly complex conceptualizations of memories; it can face the past in uniquely creative ways. From the historical novel and the trauma narrative to documentary films, alternate histories, and period piece TV shows, (auto)biographies and creative nonfiction, much, if not all of literature can be said to constitute a self-reflexive engagement with the past and modes of memory. In fact, one way of conceptualizing the hotly contested body of works called 'American literature' is to regard it as a specific collection of "American Memories."

*aspeers*, the first and currently only graduate-level peer-reviewed journal of European American studies, encourages fellow MA students from all fields to reflect on the diverse roles and meanings of memories in American culture. Please note that the contributions we are looking for might address but are not limited to the topical parameters outlined above. We welcome term papers, excerpts from theses, or papers specifically written for the sixth issue of *aspeers* by 31 October 2012. If you are seeking 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/2013](http://www.aspeers.com/2013).