



CALL FOR PAPERS: "AMERICAN MONSTERS"

aspeers: emerging voices in american studies
Call for Submissions by 23 October 2016

"The monster notoriously appears at times of crisis," Jeffrey Jerome Cohen states in his *Monster Theory*. At first glance, Cohen's assertion conveniently seems to fit the headlines by various venues—liberal and conservative—that all express a presumed crisis of the US Republican Party by referring to their 2016 presidential nominee as a "monster." However, Cohen has a different kind of crisis, and different kinds of monsters, in mind, and a broader analytical trajectory to follow: For him, American culture as such can be read "from the monsters [it] engenders."

Understood as a spectacular anomaly, a cultural shorthand that points at deeper turmoils, American culture has its fair share of monsters indeed. Whether we think of race, a social problem declared 'dead' by the post-race discourse, as a zombie roaming the land as deadly as ever, or whether we think of Barbara Creed's seminal work on the perception and portrayal of femininity as 'monstrous,' categories of difference tend to express themselves with recourse to the figure of the monster and the logic of monstrosity. In fact, as Michael Rogin points out, monsters are "a continuing feature of American politics" (xiii). As such they are worthy of critical attention.

For its tenth issue, *aspeers* thus dedicates its topical section to "American Monsters" and invites European graduate students to critically and analytically explore American literature, (popular) culture, society, history, and politics through the monsters they beget. With a host of disciplines—ranging from economy and political science to history, media studies, literary and cultural studies, and beyond—engaging such monstrosity in various forms, we welcome papers from all the fields, methodologies, and approaches that comprise American studies as well as inter- and transdisciplinary submissions. Potential paper topics could cover (but are not limited to):

- The literary figure of the fantastic monster, the zombie, the vampire, the alien, the cyborg, or the ghost, as tropes that do cultural work.
- The forms of (racialized, gendered, etc.) othering involved in portraying social or cultural outsiders as monstrous.
- Political rhetoric demonizing and dehumanizing the opponent.
- The trope of the monster in various nonfictional discourses, such as law enforcement, medicine and psychology, and many others.
- The pleasures and anxieties negotiated through representations of monsters, in genres such as horror, fantasy, science fiction, dystopia, (post)apocalypse, etc., and in media like novels, films, TV, graphic novels, or video games.

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 meanings of monsters for American culture. Please note that the contributions we are looking for might address or go beyond the topical parameters outlined above. We welcome term papers, excerpts from theses, or papers specifically written for the tenth issue of *aspeers* by 23 October 2016. 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/2017.