



CALL FOR PAPERS: "AMERICAN APOCALYPSES"

aspeers: emerging voices in american studies
Call for Submissions by October 16, 2022

In his 2017 inauguration speech, Donald Trump painted a picture of "American carnage" sweeping the nation. Echoing the rhetoric used throughout his campaign, he described his vision of the present state of America in apocalyptic terms: from "rusted out factories, scattered like tombstones across the landscape" to "the crime, and the gangs, and the drugs that have stolen too many lives." For Trump and his supporters, this apocalypse was the America he was inheriting—yet for many other Americans, such tropes were instead used to characterize the nation that Trump led from 2017 to 2021. Accordingly, in his 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden evoked similar language when he framed the presidential election as a "battle for the soul of this nation."

With the increasingly urgent crises of climate change, democratic backsliding, the pandemic, and rising international tensions, 2022 is perhaps looking more apocalyptic than recent years past. Yet from nineteenth-century Protestant revivalists to the prepper movement, Zombie movies, and environmental activism, apocalyptic language has been employed throughout US history by a variety of political and wider cultural actors to deplore the status quo or warn about a dire future. Curiously, such evocations have also often been characterized by a binary of imagining the apocalypse at the same time as pointing to its polar opposite, the hopeful promise of an alternate vision of America. Images of current crises, an impending catastrophe, or an overall American decline thus also seem to invite their dialectical opposites—utopian outlooks next to dystopian ones, dreams next to nightmares.

For its sixteenth issue, *aspeers* dedicates its topical section to "**American Apocalypses**" and invites European graduate students to critically and analytically explore US literature, (popular) culture, history, politics, society, and media through the lens of the 'apocalypse(s)'. 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 the (post-)apocalypse in US literature, film, TV, etc.
- Imaginations of American utopias or dystopias
- Historical conceptualizations of the 'end times' in the US and in a transnational context, in particular as tied to questions of power, identity, or (gendered, classed, racialized, etc.) difference
- Invocations of 'the Apocalypse' or similar notions of catastrophe, crisis, decline, etc. in political, social, economic, or religious rhetoric
- Representations and imaginations of the ongoing climate crisis
- Political or historical arguments favoring the decline of the US as a superpower in postcolonial contexts

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 Apocalypses." We welcome term papers, excerpts from theses, or papers specifically written for the sixteenth issue of *aspeers* by **October 16, 2022**. 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/2023.