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Given the political relevance of the topic of community and the apparent volatility of its meanings, it is necessary to take time and create spaces for contemplation. How can theories of community be usefully applied to various forms of cultural production? How do notions of 'communitas' affect representations as well as critiques of society and social developments? Based on a selection of papers given at the biennial conference of the Swiss Association for North American Studies in late 2016, this collection approaches discourses on literary texts and other cultural products from such angles as age studies, popular seriality, sustainability, and ecocriticism. While focused on community in contemporary American Studies, the articles in this collection also take into account some of the developments and issues surrounding community at a moment of heightened sensitivity towards this topic beyond academia.

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