

call for papers 2011

## Nature and Technology, Revisited

aspeers is the first and currently only peer-reviewed print journal for MA-level American studies scholars in Europe. It is a platform for the best work done by American studies graduate students below the PhD level. It aims to foster academic exchange among young Americanists across Europe, and to thereby advance the field as well as its genuine European perspective on 'America' and its presences and effects around the world.

As of its fourth issue, aspeers features a general section in addition to a topical one that brings academic and creative works into a dialogue on one common theme. This topical section will be organized around different notions of nature and technology and their cultural relevance for 'America.' Please feel free to submit your work for review if

- you are an American studies student at a European university and are looking to publish a paper without a topical restriction.
- you are an American studies student at a European university and are looking to publish a paper on nature, technology, or their relationship in American culture.
- you are an artist looking for a venue for work that deals with nature, technology, or their relationship in the context of 'America.'

Please see the following Calls for Papers for details. Please also note our style guide at [www.aspeers.com/style\\_\(/style\)](http://www.aspeers.com/style_(/style)) that will give you many helpful instructions on how to prepare your submission for maximum success.

academic contributions [general] due 31 October 2010 [html](#)

academic contributions [topical] due 31 October 2010 [html](#)

open submission section due 28 November 2010 [html](#)

Please see our [submission guidelines \(/submit\)](#) and [FAQ section \(/faq\)](#). Submissions should be directed to [submit@aspeers.com](mailto:submit@aspeers.com) (<mailto:submit@aspeers.com>) (or [aspeers@uni-leipzig.de](mailto:aspeers@uni-leipzig.de) (<mailto:aspeers@uni-leipzig.de>)).

### General Call for Papers

For the general section of its fourth issue, aspeers seeks outstanding academic writing demonstrating the excellence of graduate scholarship, the range of concerns scrutinized in the field, and the diversity of perspectives employed. We thus explicitly invite revised versions of term papers or chapters from theses written by students of European Master (and equivalent) programs. For this section, there are no topical limitations. Contributions should be up to 10,000 words (including abstract and list of works cited). The submission deadline is 31 October 2010.

### Topical Call for Papers on "Nature and Technology, Revisited"

Environmental disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill have reemphasized the destructive potential of nature and technology. By reevaluating these two foundational categories of imagining 'America,' contemporary scholarship has similarly moved to revise an earlier interest in the 'virgin land' and the machine's place in the mythical American 'garden.' Even more fundamentally, scholars have moved to question and deconstruct the dichotomy of nature and technology altogether. It is in this dynamic context

that we are calling for papers that revisit the cultural uses of 'nature,' reassess the meanings of technology, or attend to the ambivalences of the dichotomy from the disciplinary angles of literary and cultural studies, sociology, history, political science, and other areas of American studies.

Even before the rise of ecocriticism, nature has been scrutinized as both physical reality and cultural construct. We are thus interested in scholarship exploring the cultural uses of 'nature,' particularly as a contested signifier: How do texts (in the widest sense) imagine a taming of nature or failure thereof? In how far do notions of a dangerous nature challenge (or enable) romantic yearnings for a 'simpler' life? How do fictions of nature construct gendered and ethnic identities?

Similarly, beginning with the industrial revolution, machines have occupied a vital role in the popular imagination, both as concrete, tangible presences and as cultural signifiers. Contributions may focus, for example, on the role of technology in westward expansion, in Americanization, and in globalization. We especially encourage papers that analyze technology as a complex trope for progress, power, and democratization, but also for homogeneity, destruction, and exploitation, to name only a few.

While a rich scholarly tradition has engaged the dichotomy of nature and technology, there has also been a more recent trend to deconstruct this binarism. We are thus particularly interested in papers that critically revisit, question, or reevaluate the relationship between 'the garden' and 'the machine': How is technology being used to fantasize about an escape from social reality, replacing and revising the role nature has traditionally occupied? In how far are fictions of the cyborg anxious, yet optimistic explorations of a (post)human identity beyond established paradigms of race, class, and gender? In what ways can networks like facebook be read as 'social machines' to help understand their role in contemporary culture?

aspeers, the first and currently only graduate-level peer-reviewed journal for European American studies, invites fellow graduate students to reflect on these issues. We welcome term papers, excerpts from theses, or papers specifically written for the occasion by 31 October 2010. If you are looking to publish work beyond the topical parameters outlined above, please refer to our general Call for Papers.

Please consult our submission guidelines and additional information at [www.aspeers.com/2011 \(/2011\)](http://www.aspeers.com/2011 (/2011)).

## Call for Art Contributions

Environmental disasters like Hurricane Katrina and the BP oil spill have reemphasized the destructive potential of nature and technology, thus drawing attention to two foundational categories of imagining 'America' and to their changing and contested status. With its fourth issue, aspeers is aiming to revisit this dynamic relationship and its effects on American (self-)perception. We are accordingly interested in creative work examining American nature or American technology in a literal sense, but also ask for art exploring the cultural uses of these two as contested signifiers. Recent inquiries into this dichotomy have worked to deconstruct their presumed opposition, and therefore we are particularly interested in art contributions that critically revisit, question, or reevaluate the relationship between 'the garden' and 'the machine.'

For its open submission section, aspeers hereby calls for contributions exploring the topic of "Nature and Technology, Revisited." A list of possible contributions includes, but is not limited to:

- photography focusing on the dependence of humans on technology, and vice versa;
- collages (text, audio, or any other material) revising traditional representations of American nature (or technology) as such;
- journals, videos, or interviews on the reconfiguration of 'public' and 'private' induced by recent technological developments (the mass media, social networks, etc.);
- poetry or fiction that engages apocalyptic visions of an intrusion of nature or a takeover by machines;
- or any other artistic exploration of the topic: the open submission section is an experimental space.

We will consider for inclusion all submissions regardless of the author's institutional affiliation, geographic location, or level of study. Nonprintable material selected for publication will be included on the journal homepage. Plastic art will be on display in Leipzig at the issue's launch ceremony and will be presented as still image in the paper and online edition.

Please consult our submission guidelines, an editorial timetable, as well as additional information at [www.aspeers.com/2011 \(/2011\)](http://www.aspeers.com/2011 (/2011)). To be considered, contributions must be in by 28 November 2010.

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