



Call for Papers: "Nature and Technology, Revisited"

**aspeers: emerging voices in american studies
calls for submission by 31 October 2010**

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.