

Associazione Italiana di Studi Nord-Americani (AISNA)

RSAJournal: Rivista di Studi Americani

Special Issue

***American Apocalypse(s):
Nuclear Imaginaries and the Reinvention of Modern America***

Call for papers

Issue #31 (2020) of *RSAJournal: Rivista di Studi Americani*, the official journal of the Italian Association for North American Studies (Associazione Italiana di Studi Nord-Americani – AISNA) will feature a special issue on the broader impact that the nuclear era has had on the United States. The issue, edited by *RSAJournal* Assistant Editor, Elisabetta Bini (University of Naples Federico II), Dario Fazzi (Roosevelt Institute for American Studies), and Thomas Bishop (University of Lincoln) is titled *American Apocalypse(s): Nuclear Imaginaries and the Reinvention of Modern America* and scholars from different academic fields are invited to submit their proposals.

In 1982, while president Ronald Reagan was blessing a 40% increase in America's nuclear spending, pop-singer Prince released his famous 1999 song. "Everybody's got a bomb, we could all die any day, oh – But before I let that happen, I'll dance my life away, oh oh," the refrain went. By the early 1980s, threats of nuclear annihilation and prophecies of doom had become part and parcel of American popular culture.

The US's mastery of nuclear power is an entrenched feature of modern America. Throughout the second half of the Twentieth century, nuclear power simultaneously fascinated and repelled US society, by embodying faith in scientific progress and ancestral fears at the same time. It raised fears of a potential nuclear conflict – and therefore of a total annihilation of mankind – and was simultaneously the object of widespread beliefs in the possibility of producing an unlimited, clean and efficient source of energy. This polarizing character enabled the proliferation of different nuclear discourses and narratives. Nuclear power's outreach was total, and its breadth extended over any field of cultural production. Nuclear power reshuffled the very vocabulary of American politics and society writ large. The power of the atom, its universalism and contested sustainability alike, swayed the mindset and worldviews of generations of Americans.

This special issue aims to explore the multifaceted impact that nuclear power and culture have had and continue to have in the United States, in order to reassess and redraw the contours of an age, the nuclear one, the dark shadows of which still impinge upon us today. All disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches are welcome, and topics may include, but are not limited to:

- The interactions among different nuclear visions, including philosophical, religious, literary and artistic conceptualizations;
- Audiovisual representations of American nuclear culture, including literary, cinematographic, comic book, digital, and virtual renderings;

- Indigenous, intersectional, or transnational encounters with nuclear power and culture;
- Meta-geographies and material cultures of the nuclear;
- Gendered and racialized renderings of nuclear culture and politics;
- The international and global influence of American nuclear culture, and the multiple and complex forms of resistance to it;
- The politicization of US anti-nuclear movements and their transnational dimensions;
- Intersections between nuclear culture, and “apocalyptic culture” and “post-apocalyptic culture” writ large;
- Similarities and differences between nuclear culture and climate fiction and criticism;
- The relationship between the nuclear age and the Anthropocene.

Please send a 200-word abstract and a short biographical sketch to Elisabetta Bini (elisabetta.bini@unina.it), Dario Fazzi (d.fazzi@zeeland.nl) and Tom Bishop (tbishop@lincoln.ac.uk) by December 30. People whose abstracts have been accepted will be notified by January 15. The deadline for full-length articles (40.000 characters, including spaces, notes, and works cited) is April 15, 2020.