

Call for Papers **Getting Ready for the Present:** **Engaging with the World and the Planet** **in Contemporary Dystopian and Speculative Narratives**

Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
University of Bologna (Italy), September 3-5, 2025

In recent years new speculative, dystopian, and (post)apocalyptic narratives have characterised Japanese and Latin American cultural discourse in their multifaceted dialogue with Anglo-American production, as well as their socio-cultural impact on reality as multi/transmedia products that stimulate cultural, social, and political contexts, creating communities and affiliations and inspiring transversal movements, as well as new forms of counter-narratives and public engagement. These narratives are not only experiencing an unprecedented circulation, but have emerged from a restricted field to populate the most diverse artistic and media forms, often achieving a global resonance.

In the narratives of the new millennium, the “cognitive estrangement” theorised by Darko Suvin as the formal aspect of science fiction, simultaneously allowing for the recognition of the subject represented while creating an effect of defamiliarisation, appears even more estranging because it immerses the audience in situations that are already taking place, recognised rather than recognisable. Science fiction is not (anymore) prophecy but “about now” . As an effect of this temporal contraction, these narratives leave the specific field of the genre to flow into the space of the “augmented realism” where the future here is not just something that may happen but a “shore” (Deotto, 2018), an only slightly more advanced vantage point to better frame a reality in the making. This “augmented reality”, thus, acts as a lens on the present: not to predict but to make more visible what the technology of power has made invisible. If uncertainty has given way to expectation and to “a culture of the imminence of the disaster” (Virilio, 2007), the “when” it will happen invites us to envisage alternatives. Thus, the new dystopian narratives become also a form of “creative destructiveness” (Dole et al., 2015), a means to identify possible social transformations and imagine new forms of trans-national and trans-species alliances in the common vulnerability and precariousness.

The purpose of this conference is to bring together contributions that can enhance the dialogue between Japanese, Latin American, and Anglo-American productions through mutual contaminations, in a multi/interdisciplinary, and transmedial approach, also in the light of alternative forms of social, cultural, and political resistance and resilience. We encourage scholars and researchers from various disciplines to submit proposals related (but not limited) to:

- Postcolonial, Decolonial, Indigenous Studies, and Alternative Epistemologies
- Visual, Media, and Performance Studies
- Reception Studies
- Global Fiction and World Literature
- Gender, Queer, and Trans* Studies, Ecofeminism and Ecocriticism
- Posthuman Studies, Post-Anthropocentrism, and Trans-Species Alliances
- Disability Studies
- Micro- and Infra-Political Forms of Public Engagement

Essential Bibliography

Brown, A. *Cyborg in Latin-America*, Palgrave, 2010.

Deotto, F. "Il tempo del realismo aumentato", *Il Tascabile*, 2018, <https://www.iltascabile.com/letterature/tempo-realismo-aumentato/>.

Di Minico, E. *Il Futuro in Bilico*, Meltemi, 2018.

Di Paolo, O. *Gemidos y explosiones apocalípticas poshumanas*, Pliegos, 2013.

Dole, C., R. Hayashi & A. Poe (eds). *The Time of Catastrophe*, Ashgate, 2015.

Geilhorn, B. & K. Iwata-Weickgenannt. *Fukushima and the Arts*, Routledge, 2017.

Greco, D. *Anthropochains. Distopie geopolitiche nella fantascienza*, Rosenberg & Sellier, 2021.

Lafontaine, T. *Science Fiction Theory and Ecocriticism: Environments and Nature in Eco-dystopian and Post-apocalyptic Novels*, LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing 2016.

Mercier, C. "Ficciones distópicas latinoamericanas: Elaboraciones esquizo-utópicas", *Aisthesis*, 65, 2019.

Meschiari, M. *Antropocene Fantastico. Scrivere Un Altro Mondo*, Armillaria, 2020

Qiao M. (ed.), *Into the Fantastical Spaces of Contemporary Japanese Literature*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2022.

Reati, F. *Postales Del Porvenir*, Biblios, 2006.

Tanaka, M. *Apocalypse in Contemporary Japanese Science Fiction*, Palgrave, 2014.

Virilio, P. *L'Université du désastre*, Galilée, 2007.

Wake H. *Ecocriticism in Japan*, Lexington Books, 2019.

Walliss J., Newport Kenneth G. C. *The End All Around Us: Apocalyptic Texts and Popular Culture*, Routledge, 2014.

The Conference is an event related to the PRIN 2022 "Getting ready for the present: new global dystopian imaginaries and public engagement. Transcultural and transmedial dialogues between Japanese, Latin American, British and Anglo American cultures" (2022ZTES8N_001) - P.I.: Paola Scrolavezza (University of Bologna). Financed by the European Union - NextGenerationEU through the Italian Ministry of University and Research under PNRR - Mission 4 Component 2, Investment 1.1.



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Submission are accepted in English.

Please send the abstract for your proposal (500 words max) together with a short bio-bibliographical note at lilec.dystopia-prin22@unibo.it, as subject of the e-mail: "Getting Ready for the Present"

Deadline for the submission of the abstracts: 31 March 2025

Declaration of Acceptance: 15 May 2025

Scientific and Organizing Committee: Paola Scrolavezza, Edoardo Balletta, Luca Paolo Bruno, Francesco Cattani, Gianluca Coci, Giulia Colelli, Veronica De Pieri, Beatrice Masi, Rita Monticelli, Federica Moscatelli, Marta Olivi, Juan Scassa, Gino Scatasta, Anna Specchio, Valeria Stabile, Roberto Vecchi.