

CFP: Italian Fantastika: Re-Imagining Identity via the Speculative Fictions of the Italian Diaspora

Initial inquiries welcome.

Proposals due: July 22, 2022

Individual entries: Between 7,000 and 8,000 words (due January 2023)

Subject areas: Italian Diaspora Studies, Speculative Fiction,
Film and Media Studies, Comics Studies,
Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States, Gender Studies

Speculative fictions, writ large, call on their readers to ask “what if,” to consider possibilities too difficult or too emotional for verisimilitudinous treatment. Wayne Booth and Martha Nussbaum have considered this potential an ethical strength of fiction—an ability to work out knotty or nuanced questions of right and wrong. Bruno Bettelheim and the Frankfurt School saw many uses of enchantment. Ytasha Womack, Donna Haraway, and Sianne Ngai have theorized narrative as a technology for imagining more just political orders. In light of these critical traditions, this book seeks to investigate whether speculative fictions are a vehicle for examining Italian diasporic identities and the implications of those identities in a broader world. It also asks what Italian cultures in diaspora have to teach us about fantasy, science fiction, and horror today.

The editors of this anthology are interested in Italian/American science fiction, fantasy, and horror multimedia narratives - which we will signify collectively as “fantastika” - as a means of exploring the present and future of Italian ethnic and cultural identity and in expanding the academic field of Italian Diaspora Studies. This project has the potential to reorient thinking about Italian Studies away from primarily nostalgic modes into more forward-looking territory, as well as to encourage a consideration of fantastika’s potential of serving as an alternative storytelling paradigm to realism, the default mode of immigrant and diaspora narrative. The editors chose the term fantastika to represent genres such as horror, science fiction, and fantasy, and are interested in essays that examine works produced in a variety of media, including books, films, television and streaming shows, comic books, video games, and other forms of visual art. To place these American works in their proper context, we will also include research considering fantastika produced in Italy and its legacy both in its country of origin and abroad. Significantly, the term “fantastika” comes from Russian and Polish science fiction scholarship and has been popularized domestically by John Clute in the essay “Fantastika in the World Storm,” from *Pardon this Intrusion*.

The CFP will request articles that confront the following themes and genres:

- speculative comics/graphic narratives and/versus “fumetti”
- writers and artists in television and film of the fantastic
- authors of horror, sci fi, fantasy
- characters in horror, science fiction, fantasy
- horror/science fiction/fantasy images of or by Italian-Americans
- Italian American identity as a site of fantastic fiction
- Italian American scholars of fantastika: horror, science fiction, and fantasy

We will also request that contributors address some of the following key questions and themes:

- intersectional Italian-American identities
- race, class, and/or gender as/and Italian-American identity
- queering Italian-American identity
- “cyborg” identities

- using Italian-American identity to interrogate assimilation and the marginalization of nonassimilated populations
- relationship of "Italian" and "Italian-American" identities in a global age
- foodways as a marker of identity
- nostalgia in/as speculative fiction

Finally, we will ask each essay to be accompanied by a first-person metanarrative describing the inspiration for the essay and the contributor's positionality.

The editors have a list of possible topics and primary and secondary sources available upon request.

Editors Contact Information:

Please submit your proposal to the editors (Lisa DeTora, Marc DiPaolo, and Anthony Lioi) via italianfantastika@gmail.com