

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Dystopian Worlds beyond Storytelling.

**Representations of Dehumanized Societies in Literature, Media and Political Discourses:
Multidisciplinary Perspectives**

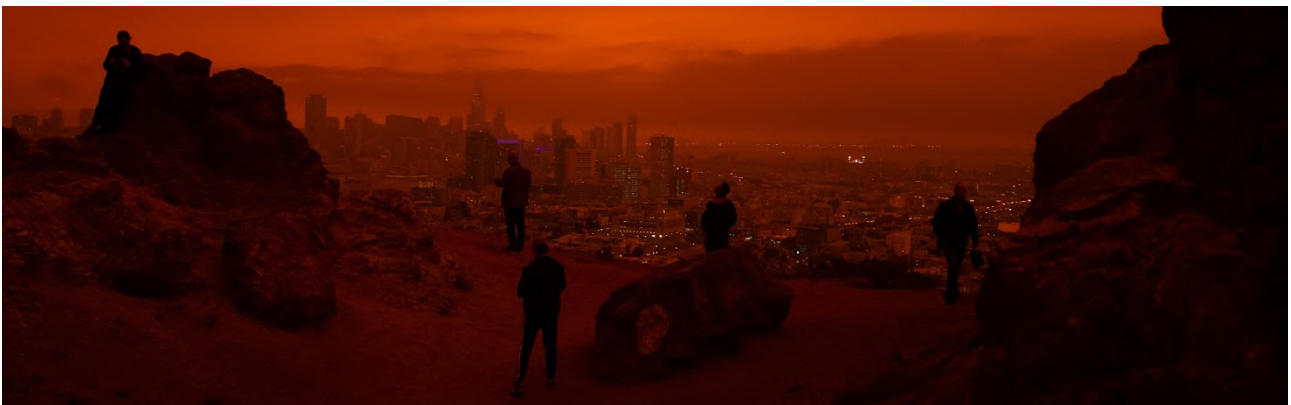
Milano, 15-16 September 2022

**Facoltà di Scienze Politiche e Sociali
Facoltà di Scienze Linguistiche e Letterature Straniere**

CeRTA
| Centro di Ricerca
sulla Televisione e gli Audiovisivi



**UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA**
del Sacro Cuore



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Conference Venue: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano.

In the last two decades, media and cultural production has been characterized by an increasing representation of dystopian worlds and alternative and “possible universes”, as narrative tools to describe fears and contradictions of human beings face to the uncertainty of the future as well as the reworkings of the past and the memory. The pandemic emergence has accentuated this particular creative process, not only in the direction of health and epidemiological topics, but – more in general – towards a reconfiguration of new imageries about catastrophes and other social, cultural and technological upheavals.

As part of a wider project on the so-called “clash of narratives” and its media representation and political use and mobilization, carried out by Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore also through the project of an “Atlas of dystopian storytelling” (www.unicatt.it/atlanteditopiemediali), the International Conference aims to focus, from a strong multidisciplinary perspective - including media, political, literary, linguistic, sociological and cultural studies - on the various ways the theme of dystopia has become relevant and massive in contemporary popular culture, both in traditional and digital forms, highlighting how it has changed across different languages and formats, also in the direction of a strong transmediality (novels, comics, movies, TV series, videogames, digital and social platforms, political discourses and so on).

Dystopic societies have always been present in literature, film and media studies, but there is no doubt that they heavily emerged in recent cultural production as the result of deep social and political transformations that occurred in Western and non-Western societies after the collapse of twentieth-century ideologies and traumatic events – such as the attack on the Twin Towers or the current pandemic crisis. Thus, new narratives have emerged, often representing neo-populist or conspiracy theories on one hand, and apocalyptic future or “parallel present” on the other. The scenario of popular culture products reflects and also forges contemporary fears and anxieties within a society characterized by the domain of the technique, migrations and nomadic processes, democratic and environmental crisis, health emergencies; all aspects that underline the fragility of our societies and reconfigure concepts of space (production and representation of places, both real and fictional) and time (the role of past, present and future in dystopic media narratives), providing a cartography of complex trajectories and hybridizations of media, genres, and discourses of dystopias in popular culture and social practices.

Possible topics for proposals may include (but are not limited to):

- Digital dystopias and dystopias within the digital eco-system;
- Technological dystopias in past and present narratives;
- Health emergencies and pandemic;
- Environmental catastrophes as critical rethorics against current ecological and economic models and in favour of sustainable and green policies;
- Relationship between human beings and technology and role and representation of AI;
- Crisis of democratic societies and consequences for geopolitical balances in light of the emergence of conspiracy theories;
- Conflicts and splits in contemporary societies and struggles for power;
- Migrations and allegorical use of diversity and new forms of cohabitation;

- Integration of dystopic dynamics and narrative pipe within conventional media products;
- Uchronic stories, “*what if*” mechanisms and the reinvention of the past;
- Geographical references in dystopic media products: places, imaginaries, architectures, symbols, but also markets, production hubs and industry locative elements that help specific types of dystopic stories;
- Time as narrative mechanism to strengthen apocalyptic and disturbing disquiets;
- Transmediality and adaptation of literature and media contents and the creation of “dystopic” media franchises;
- Soundscapes and the description of dystopic worlds through digital and popular music.

We invite abstract submissions for 20-minute papers. Abstracts should be between 150-200 words in length and should be accompanied by a brief biographical note of the speaker/s. The deadline for submissions is **15th June**. Accepted papers will be confirmed by **20th June**. The language of the conference will be English. Please send abstracts to atlante.distopie@unicatt.it.