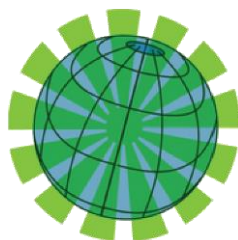


ContactZone

Journal of the Italian Association on Science Fiction and the Fantastic



Call for Papers

Special Issue

Re-Configuring Gender in Science Fiction Narratives

edited by

Giuseppe Balirano and Oriana Palusci

The representation of transgressive sexuality, transgender metamorphosis, transvestite and androgynous characters has been widely explored in the genre of Science Fiction since its early beginnings. This special issue aims at investigating the identity representation of gender, including that of ‘non-binary’ characters, in literary sci-fi, considered as the ideal narrative tool through which it is not only possible to imagine alternative times and geographies, but also those ‘non-places’ where fluid identities of gender non-conforming people, in their ongoing process of transformation and reformulation, can be freely recognised as real and possible entities. Beyond any form of discrimination, disseminated by means of emerging hate discourses that generate stereotypes, fears and prejudices, non-conforming peoples and entities – humans, aliens, cyborgs, androids, replicants – become natural protagonists of contemporary science fiction narratives with pivotal roles that are perfectly integrated into imaginary futuristic societies. Consequently, the represented subject, no longer seen as a coherent and unified being, becomes an inevitable shape-shifter, a mutant divided and displaced and, as such, an individual who freely participates in the process of linguistic change in contexts of use that the writer has semantised.

This issue, therefore, intends to explore the way in which the very notion of binary subjectivity, as described by the Cartesian *cogito*, slowly gives way to contemporary inclusive narratives, giving life to new characters who naturally inhabit the scenarios of contemporary science fiction through unstable roles and completely ‘de-generated’ narrations of identity. The editors are particularly interested in the discursive and linguistic dimensions of the representation of sexualities in Science Fiction narratives. Understanding the construction of such discourses, necessarily requires an interdisciplinary approach which includes, but is not limited to, literary criticism, critical discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, multimodal (critical) discourse analysis, linguistic anthropology, pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics, queer linguistics, among others (see Wendy Gay Pearson, Veronica Hollinger, and Joan Gordon (eds), *Queer Universes: Sexualities in Science Fiction*, Liverpool University Press, 2008).

Possible areas of inquiry may include, but are not limited to:

- TV and filmic science fiction gender non-conforming characters;
- Graphic novels in which gender identity defines the science fiction world;
- Sexualities in SF video games and internet-related games;

- Novels and short stories featuring gender alternatives;
- Science fiction and linguistic inventions on gender performance;
- Human, post-humans and gender;
- Gender and society: performing non-binary gender;
- Sexualities, bodies and society.

Submission of abstracts:

Please send a 300-word abstract and a 100-word bio-note to gbalirano@unior.it and aisff.starfiction@gmail.com

Important dates:

Deadline for abstract submissions: 31 March 2020

Notification of acceptance: 5 April 2020

Submission of paper: 31 July 2020

Publication of the issue: December 2020

ContactZone is a double-blind peer-reviewed journal.