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call for papers – issue 21 – fall 2027

Postcolonial Horror: Violence, Terror, and the Decolonial Imagination

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From the nineteenth-century representation of racial and cultural otherness in Gothic literature all the way to contemporary narratives of contagion and invasion, horror has developed into an especially receptive language for articulating the anxieties and desires of the colonial project (Arata 1990; Halberstam 1995; Malchow 1996; Khair 2009). At the same time, postcolonial writers and artists have also appropriated and redeployed the tropes and conventions historically used to construct colonial otherness, turning to horror as an increasingly powerful means for interrogating the material and symbolic afterlives of colonialism, the genealogies of imperial violence, and the contemporary manifestations of historical trauma.

Figures of liminality, monstrosity and contamination give form to histories and structures that colonial discourse has sought to other, conceal or normalize, from genocide and enslavement to environmental devastation, extractivism and displacement. In postcolonial horror, these histories resurface as hauntings, allowing their violence to return as a material force within the present (Gordon 2008). Horror thus becomes a critical grammar through which literature, cinema, theatre, visual culture, and performance negotiate the enduring legacies of colonial modernity.

Indigenous, Black, diasporic, and Global South writers, filmmakers, and artists have been increasingly reshaping the conventions of horror from their distinct cultural, historical and epistemological traditions. Placing these inherited conventions into dialogue with local cosmologies, ancestral memory, oral traditions and decolonial political imagination, these works unsettle established notions of terror and the monstrous, and open horror to questions of narrative sovereignty, representational and epistemic justice, and collective resurgence.

FES 21 seeks to explore postcolonial horror as an aesthetic, political, and epistemological framework, examining its capacity to challenge Western assumptions about humanity, rationality, embodiment, nature, temporality, and memory. Particular attention will be devoted to contemporary transformations of the genre in the context of racial relations, climate change, extractive capitalism, and emerging technologies of surveillance. Contemporary horror offers a particularly powerful lens through which to understand new configurations of colonial violence, while simultaneously imagining practices of resistance, survival, and decolonial futures.

This issue invites contributions addressing, among others, the following questions:

- How does horror represent, mediate or make visible the historical violence of colonialism?
- What distinguishes colonial horror from de/postcolonial horror?

- How are monstrosity, humanity, and alterity reconfigured in Indigenous, Black, and diasporic cultural production?
- How do ghosts, zombies, vampires, and other figures of horror mediate and/or redress collective memory?
- In what ways does horror contribute to processes of narrative justice, historical repair, and decolonial remembrance?
- What new forms of horror emerge in the age of the Anthropocene, global extractivism, and artificial intelligence?

Suggested Themes

Contributions may address, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- **Colonialism and horror:** colonialism as historical trauma and ongoing epistemic and power structure; hauntology, necropolitics, racialization, and institutional violence; genocide, slavery, and traumatic memory; extractivism, racial capitalism, and environmental colonialism.
- **Monstrous and Spectral Figures:** zombies, vampires, ghosts, witches, cannibals, and hybrid beings; spectrality and monstrosity as political metaphor; contamination, mutation, and the colonial body; queer embodiment and decolonial monstrosity.
- **Indigenous horror:** Indigenous cosmologies and horror aesthetics; hauntology, ancestral spirits, and territorial memory; narrative sovereignty; multispecies relationality, animism, and Indigenous ontologies.
- **Black and diasporic horror:** the afterlives and hauntings of slavery; diaspora, race, and memory; Afrofuturism versus Afropessimism, Black horror, and dark speculative fiction; alternative temporalities and forms of historical remembrance.
- **Ecologies of horror:** eco-horror and environmental colonialism; climate crisis and ecocide; extractivism, petrocultures, and toxic landscapes; relations among humans, non-human beings, plants, environments, and technologies.
- **Film, media, and visual culture:** postcolonial horror cinema; graphic novels, video games, and digital media; performance and performative horror; visual and sonic aesthetics of fear.

Particular consideration will be given to comparative contributions that place different geographical areas, cultural traditions, and media into dialogue, as well as to studies that explore the intersections among Indigenous, Black, diasporic, and Global South cultural production. The objective of this issue is to foster a genuinely transdisciplinary conversation on postcolonial horror as a critical framework for understanding the enduring structures of coloniality and the different ways in which contemporary cultural production imagines resistance, survival, resurgence, and decolonial futures.

Please, send your proposals for articles, reviews, interviews, or creative contributions (previously unpublished; up to 500 words), together with a brief bio note, to: francesca.furlan.4@phd.unipd.it, marco.petrelli@unipi.it, alice.salion@phd.unipd.it

Deadline for abstract submission: 14 December 2026.

Acceptance of proposals will be notified by: 1 February 2027.

Deadline for article submission: 26 April 2027.

Deadline for submitting accepted peer-reviewed articles: 1 September 2027.

FES 21 will be published in Fall 2027.

Suggested bibliography

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