

# Call for Papers

*Messengers from the Stars:*  
*On Science Fiction and Fantasy*

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*Messengers from the Stars* is an international, peer-reviewed journal, offering academic articles, reviews, and providing an outlet for a wide range of creative work inspired by science fiction and fantasy. The 2021 issue will be dedicated to the following theme:

## **Pandemics**

For the 2021 *Messengers from the Stars* issue we will focus on the current pandemic and how it relates to past and present cultural expressions. The concept of a globally-impacting health threat has been widely explored in dystopian fiction from Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* to Margaret Atwood's MaddAdam trilogy, among many others. In a wider sense, however, the contagion trope in literature and the arts is far-reaching and with a well-established tradition that is closely related to that of historical plagues. Whether by placing its characters in lockdown due to the Black Death as in Boccaccio's *Decameron* or speculating on the impending threat of a SARS outbreak in a globalized world as in Soderbergh's *Contagion*, the health-related catastrophe is as present in fiction as any other human experience.

Therefore, given the current global pandemic, we look at where and how events of this nature are represented, whether in literature, film, television, videogames or other cultural expressions. What are their fundamental concerns and expectations? How do they reflect on the human experience when faced with such a catastrophe? What role do science and superstition play in these instances? How is our worldview informed by these narratives, past and present?

Possible topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Ecotopias, dystopias, overpopulation and sustainability
- Medical Humanities in Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror and the uncanny

- Speculative fiction and concerns for the future
- Pandemics and temporalities (utopia/dystopia/apocalypse, perception of time during epidemics)
- Prophetic visions, occultism and the supernatural, particularly in relation to perceived global calamities
- Representations of the pandemic across the arts and contemporary discourse in general
- Zombies, vampires, parasitic aliens and other contagious threats

Submissions, between 4000 and 6000 words in English, must be sent to [mfts.journal@gmail.com](mailto:mfts.journal@gmail.com) by **July 30, 2021**. The authors will be notified by the end of August.

In addition, you can propose a book or film review. We welcome book and film reviews on current science fiction and fantasy research and PhD dissertations. Reviews should be between 500 to 1,000 words. Longer reviews, e.g. dealing with more than one book, should be agreed upon with the Editorial Board.

All submissions must follow the journal's guidelines available at:

<http://messengersfromthestars.lettras.ulisboa.pt/journal/submission-guidelines>