



Editorial 2/2020

Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Esko Suoranta, Laura E. Goodin, & Dennis Wilson Wise

We are pleased to welcome you to this issue of *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*.

In our prefatory, Hanna-Riikka Roine places both narrative and speculation squarely in the midst of possible strategies for making sense of – and thus responding to – a chaotic world in the grip of a pandemic, social unrest, and environmental crisis. She argues for recognising speculation as complementary to narrative as a strategy of “bringing the possible into the present”.

Excitingly, *Fafnir* was presented this year with a World Fantasy Award, becoming the first academic journal to be so honoured. We have included in this issue the text of the acceptance speech we delivered via Zoom (like everyone in this strange year) at the awards ceremony; like Dr. Roine’s prefatory, it stresses the power of both the practice and study of speculative fiction as tools for asking new questions as well as seeking new answers.

Each of the articles in this issue provides a fascinating example of the use of speculative fiction as a lens for examining and, ultimately, better understanding humanity’s struggles and successes. Juan David Cruz-Duarte’s “Ray Bradbury on Race and Segregation: The Case of ‘Way in the Middle of the Air’ and ‘The Other Foot’” looks at how these two Ray Bradbury stories engage with racial conflict and segregation in the American South of the Jim Crow era and what they say about Bradbury’s hopes for a truly post-racial society. Aino-Kaisa Koistinen similarly examines the idea of conflict with the Other, looking specifically at how emotions can be manipulated in such conflicts by the way stories are told – in “Framing War and the Nonhuman in Science-Fiction Television: The Affective Politics of *V*”.

Kevin Spicer applies a Lacanian approach to questions of what constitutes and determines personhood and subjectivity in “The AI Computer as Therapist: Using Lacan to Read AI and (All-Too-Human) Subjectivities in Science Fiction Stories by Bruce Sterling and Naomi Kritzer”. Using a different

philosophic approach, Katariina Kärkelä analyses how various ways of knowing are used and valued, and ultimately how they compete, in “Why is Reason a Vice? Empiricism, Rationalism, and Condemnation of Science in H. C. Andersen’s ‘The Snow Queen’”.

Amanda Landgren moves beyond the subjective to look at the intersection of place and identity, and how one can transform the other, in “How the Fantastic Spaces in *Memoirs of a Survivor* and *Neverwhere* Destabilise the Notion of a Uniform, Homogeneous Urban Identity”. Eleanor Drage also takes urban societies as a starting point for an examination of individual agency and intentional communities as instruments of justice in an impersonal, fundamentally repressive class system in “Paths Towards Multispecies Superintelligence and Socio-Economic Justice: Nicoletta Vallorani’s *Il Cuore Finto di DR*”.

We have a bumper crop of book reviews, with the reviewed works ranging from monster theory to children’s literature, time machines, studies of race, gender, and dis/ability, and a critical overview of the rich oeuvre of Canadian speculative fiction.

We also offer two conference reports: Filip Boratyn’s take on the London Science Fiction Research Community’s Beyond Borders: Empires, Bodies, Science Fictions, held in September, and Adam Edwards’s report on the CyberPunk Culture Conference, held in July (both online).

We complete this issue with a transcript of Kaisa Kortekallio’s engaging and intriguing *lectio praecursoria* of her PhD defense, “Reading Mutant Narratives”. She examines the role of bodies – of both readers and characters – in mutant narratives, and how such narratives can introduce estrangement into readers’ own body awareness; she argues that this, paradoxically, provokes a deeper engagement with their real-world physicality and, in turn, with the environment that sustains this physicality.

We hope this cornucopia of scholarship provides you with some excellent reading and reflection over the holidays. All of us at *Fafnir* wish you all the best for whatever celebrations are yours, and for a safer, brighter 2021.

Live long and prosper!

Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Esko Suoranta, and Laura E. Goodin, Editors-in-chief
Dennis Wise, Reviews Editor

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