



Editorial 2/2025

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Fafnir's second issue of 2025 kicks off the new year – already off to a tumultuous start rife with speculative possibilities – with another timely selection of speculative fiction research, essays, and book reviews.

Many of the contributions to this issue follow the exploration of novel speculative perspectives to the climate crisis that has been an important line of inquiry in our journal throughout 2025. We are grateful to Israel A. C. Noletto, Professor of English Language and Literature at the Federal Institute of Piauí (IFPI), Brazil, for providing us with an inspiring prefatory on such themes for this issue, “The Search for the Perfect Era: Speculative Fiction and Eutopian Imagination.” Noletto reflects on the representation of utopia in contemporary speculative fiction, drawing attention to recent narrative movements such as solarpunk and hopepunk whilst looking back to the influences and impacts of “Golden Age” SF. Exploring a range of optimistic futures, Noletto ushers *Fafnir* into the new year, arguing for the ways in which speculative fiction “reasserts the power of storytelling as a cultural force”, empowering and emboldening writers and readers alike.

The two peer-reviewed articles that follow also engage in pragmatic and timely ecocritical inquiries by interrogating the critical potential of fantasy world-building as a tool for climate education and exploring a new mode of telling environmental and future-oriented stories that is emerging in Norwegian literature. In “Climate Models as a Retroactive and Exploratory World-building Tool,” John Cook, Alexander Farnsworth, Dan Lunt, Dann Mitchell, and Michael Farnsworth examine the famous fantasy worlds of J. R. R. Tolkien, George R. R. Martin, and Robert Jordan, as well as one built by Cook himself, as speculative climate models on a global scale. In so doing, they make a case for fantasy world-building as an engaging form for making climate science accessible to general audiences. “*Undringslitteratur*: Understanding New Norwegian Speculative Fictions” by Marta Tveit, in turn, identifies a form of speculative storytelling that is characterized by its Anthropocene poetics of scale, attention to everyday life, engagement with spirituality, and articulation of local elements considered characteristically Norwegian.

The issue also includes an essay by Markus Laukkanen, “*Game of Thrones* as a Work of Fantasy Fiction in the Storytelling Environment of the Internet,” based on the *lectio praecursoria* he gave at his doctoral defense at Tampere University in November 2025. In this essay, Laukkanen draws attention to the interactive media culture that formed around *Game of Thrones* as an intriguing challenge for speculative fiction research, which challenges both our notions of the relations between storytellers and readers and our preconceptions of the fantasy genre and its fandom.

This issue’s book reviews section is curated, for the last time, by our longtime Reviews Editor Jari Käkälä, whom we warmly thank for his dedicated service to *Fafnir*. The section is again full of insightful reviews of interesting scholarly publications on speculative fiction. Jeremy Brett reviews *Science Fiction and the Historical Novel: Days of Future Pasts*, edited by Ian P. MacDonald and Kate Polak, which explores the intersections between the historical and the speculative, examining the relationship between the past and the representation of possible future worlds. Turning to recent studies in fantasy research, Natalie Hopwood reviews Richard Z. Gallant’s monograph *Germanic Heroes, Courage, and Fate: Northern Narratives of Tolkien’s Legendarium*, which offers a new perspective on the theory of Northern Courage and the heroic, as presented in the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. Andrea Valeiras’s review of *The Songs of the Spheres: Lewis, Tolkien and the Overlapping Realms of their Imagination*, edited by Łukasz Neubauer and Guglielmo Spirito, highlights another recent work in Tolkien studies, which offers a critical comparison of the works of Tolkien and C. S. Lewis with a particular focus on Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Tolkien’s (sub)creative projects. Anna Juhi John provides, in turn, a welcome outlook to science fiction studies in India by reviewing Urvashi Kuhhad’s *Science Fiction and Indian Women Writers: Exploring Radical Potentials*, which places analytical focus on the works of Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, Manjula Padmanabhan, Priya Sarukkai Chabria and Vandana Singh. The focus on fantasy continues in Jayden King’s review of Matthew Oliver’s *Magic Words, Magic Worlds: Form and Style in Epic Fantasy*, which focuses on the art of close reading. Oliver engages with selected novels from authors such as Brandon Sanderson, Robert Jordan and N. K. Jemisin, to explore language and style in epic fantasy. Calling attention an often-overlooked theme in speculative fiction, Miranda Miller’s review of Julie Wosk’s *Artificial Women: Sex Dolls, Robot Caregivers, and More Facsimile Females* examines the development and representation of artificial women across media, highlighting the relationships between sexuality, gender, technology and simulation. Finally, Cristina Arbués Caballé reviews Jaime Harrison’s *Digital Culture in Contemporary Fiction*, which investigates the representation of computational algorithms in the works of Joshua Cohen, Nicola Barker, Neal Stephenson, and a visual novel developed by Grasshopper Manufacture.

May this issue of *Fafnir* provide readers inspiration and food for thought for the new year. From the lair of Fafnir, we wish you all happy reading!

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