



Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and
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Editorial 3–4/2017

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We are happy to introduce the double issue 3–4/2017 *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*. The issue is partly a themed issue, as it includes articles and essays submitted to our special issue on fantasy and reception (3/2017). In addition to these, the issue also provides articles from themes outside reception.

As it is a double issue, we also have not one but two prefatory essays. The first prefatory by Irma Hirsjärvi and Urpo Kovala, “Two Paths to Fantasy Studies” introduces the themed section and describes the establishment of the field of fantasy studies in Finland, and its paths, through two members of the Fafnir Editorial Board. It also sets the tone for Fafnir and its singular contribution to science fiction and fantasy research in the Nordic region, as the journal enters its fifth year in 2018. The second prefatory by Geoffrey C. Bowker, “My Time with Science Fiction” (for issue 4/2017), discusses the concept of time in science fiction, and Bowker’s own fascination with the possibilities offered by the genre.

We also have three articles. The first article, themed for the special issue, is Tanja Välisalo’s article “Engaging with film characters: Empirical study on the reception of characters in *The Hobbit* films” presents the results on Välisalo’s work in the global Hobbit project. The article discusses how audiences engage with fictional characters, and suggests new modifications to existing theories on audience engagement. Matthew Larnach in “Exploring David Eddings’ application of military logistics in *The Belgariad*” carefully investigates the feasibility of Eddings’ fantasy scenarios to show how the lack of historical research in general around the issue of logistics in medieval settings also affects fictional representations of those settings. Finally, Katherine Tucker in “Violence, Politics and Religion: Cosmic War in *Game of Thrones*” draws upon the cosmic war theory developed by Mark Juergensmeyer to explore how George R. R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* series and the tv show illustrate the dangers of mixing religion and politics in modern day America.

For the special issue, we also have an essay “Thinking and theorising disappointment: a report from The World Hobbit Project” by Emeritus Professor Martin Barker, who has a long career in reception studies, including the Lord of the Rings Project and The Game of Thrones Project (ongoing). The essay deals with one particular aspect of audience engagement, that of disappointment with fiction, and provides a wide range of viewpoints to theorizing it.

The final section of our special issue is a report from Worldcon 75 (held in Helsinki, Finland in fall 2017). Esko Suoranta writes about the most intriguing papers presented at the event’s academic track that was, this time, centred on estrangement to honour the 100th anniversary of this Viktor Shklovsky’s concept, a topic highlighted by Merja Polvinen in our previous prefatory article.

In our book reviews section, Päivi H Vääänen provides a succinct and incisive review of *Gender Identity and Sexuality in Current Fantasy and Science Fiction* (2017), edited by Francesca Barbini, a collection she calls “burningly topical and very much needed.”

In this double issue, we are also starting a new series of introductory projects and networks relevant to science fiction and fantasy research. The first one to be introduced is the international Monster Network which focuses on everything dealing with monsters and the monstrous. We also continue our engagement with major science fiction and fantasy research collections around the world, and this time we interview Sephora Hossein, who presents the Merrill Collection in Toronto, Canada in her capacity as head of the collection. From this issue on, we give them a separate section, entitled snapshots.

The ending of year 2017 marks an end of an era in *Fafnir*, when the last of the founding editors, Jyrki Korpua, will leave the journal. We the other editors of *Fafnir* wish Jyrki all the best in his future endeavours!

We also have a number of new announcements for our readers. Starting 2018, the FINFAR board has decided to bring down the number of issues of *Fafnir* annually to two instead of four. We believe this would help us work with a larger number of essays per issue, as well as give more time for the peer-review process. We are also looking into the possibilities of bringing at least a selection of essays from the journal into print.

Starting from issue 1/2018, Laura E. Goodin joins Team Fafnir as new Editor-in-Chief. Laura brings to *Fafnir* over a decade of editorial experience with other journals, including *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice* and the *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*. In addition to her editorial experience, she has also curated and managed the production processes of speculative works, including “The Cabinet of Oddities” which paired composers with speculative-fiction writers to create new musical works. Laura is also an author, and has published spec-fic novels, radio and stage play scripts, libretti, and poetry. Laura holds a PhD in creative writing from the University of Western Australia, and has attended the 2007 Clarion South workshop.

Also from 1/2018, Dennis W. Wise joins Team Fafnir as Reviews Editor. Wise holds a PhD from Middle Tennessee State University with a focus on the work of J. R. R. Tolkien and the political philosopher Leo Strauss. He has published numerous articles in journals such as *Tolkien Studies*, *Mythlore*, *The Journal of Tolkien Research*, and *Fastitoc*. Wise currently serves as a lecturer at the University of Arizona.

We look forward to welcoming them both in the next issue.

Live Long and Prosper!

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