



# Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research

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## Editorial 1/2018

*Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen, Laura E. Goodin & Dennis Wise*

We are happy to present this issue of *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*, the first with our new reviews editor, Dennis Wise, and our new co-editor-in-chief, Laura E. Goodin, on board.

The prefatory essay this issue is a retrospective of *Fafnir*'s first five years from one of its inaugural co-editors, Jyrki Korpua. He gives a true insider's view of how an academic journal comes into being and continues to grow. The current editors would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Korpua for his hard work, editorial skill, dedication, and leadership in helping *Fafnir* grow and flourish.

Although our three articles this month cover a broad sweep of topics and approaches, they nevertheless have in common the use of speculative fiction as a lens to probe and critique aspects of society. Michael Godhe's "The Old Stories Had Become Our Prison" discusses how issues raised by globalisation are represented in John Barnes's novels *A Million Open Doors* (1992) and *Earth Made of Glass* (1998); he argues that science fiction can work as a model for a futural public sphere, bridging the gap between the humanities and natural science, and enabling a broader public discourse about the societal impacts of science and technology. In "Mass Surveillance and the Negation of the Monomyth", Houman Sadri uses two modern superhero narratives in the post-9/11 cultural landscape to examine how the notion of heroism itself is challenged somewhat by another seemingly ubiquitous product of the terrorist attacks: the proliferation, and absorption into Monomythical narratives, of the tropes of mass surveillance and technologically-aided snooping. In "The Absence of Madness: Altered States in James Tiptree, Jr.'s Short Fiction", Elizabeth Oakes presents a case study of two of Tiptree's short stories, focusing on her representation of altered states of consciousness, such as madness, drug trips, and dreams, combining a quantitative, computational approach with a qualitative, stylistically framed reading. The reading locates the absences that typify Tiptree's portrayal of altered states in the text and relates these depictions to contemporaneous ideas about mental illness.

This issue also offers an interview by Beata Gubasci with multiple award-winning author, editor, and critic Jeff VanderMeer. The interview not only elicits Mr. VanderMeer's thoughts on the New Weird, a literary movement in speculative fiction with which he is closely associated, it also provides a scholarly review of the context from which the New Weird emerged and continues to develop.

Reflecting the vibrant research environment that speculative fiction is enjoying, this issue includes reviews of nine new books on topics ranging from superhero comics to climate change, werewolves, science-fiction films, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

In our series of "snapshots" of interesting projects and networks relevant to science fiction and fantasy research, Pamela A. Jackson profiles in this issue San Diego State University's Speculative Fiction Collections, which include the oeuvres and personal collections of a number of

influential writers, as well as comics, zines, and other ephemera, documentation of fandoms and fan culture, and what is believed to be the world's largest collection of fiction and nonfiction English-language books related to vampires.

We hope this issue intrigues and informs you, and inspires your own research journeys.

Live long and prosper!

Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen, and Laura E. Goodin, Editors-in-chief

Dennis Wise, Reviews Editor

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