



Editorial 2/2023

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Welcome to *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*'s second issue of 2023! Together, we sail into the holiday season on the wings of fresh research in speculative fiction.

We would like to extend warm thanks to Pawel Frelik, the reigning president of International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts and a recent recipient of Science Fiction Research Association's Innovative Research Award, for his prefatory "(Largely) Invisible Science Fictions," which highlights various marginal forms of science fiction. Worth reading for the filmic additions to your watchlist alone, this engaging essay asks us to consider the sheer breadth of science fictional works, well beyond the Western traditions and longer narrative forms.

Then, soar into this issue's selection of peer-reviewed articles with a Finnish language contribution from Finland's leading Tolkien researcher, Jyrki Korpua. "Hautaamistavat J.R.R. Tolkienin fantasiafiktiossa" explores the connections between the funerary traditions of various ancient cultures and those depicted in Tolkien's fantasy fiction. Ian McLaughlin's "Giving Wands Their Due: *Harry Potter*, Speculative Realism, and the Power of Objects" takes a similarly fresh angle into another massively popular series: the article mobilizes Object Oriented Ontology, Speculative Realism, and related branches of philosophy to explore the agency of wands in the wixen world of *Harry Potter*. Eero Suoranta's "I hope they really evolve into a different species from us': Human-Nature Disconnection, Eeriness, and Social Class in Han Song's 'Submarines'" shifts this issue's analytical gaze to Chinese science fiction, demonstrating how the short story "Submarines" challenges the widespread idea of a "return to nature" while also calling attention to the links between environmental problems and class politics. Grace Borland Sinclair's "Grafting Symbiosis: Care, Empathy, and Scientific Reform in Naomi Mitchison's *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*" demonstrates how Mitchison's novel represents a feminist rethinking of the role of care and empathy in the scientific method through the lens of alternate forms of mothering. The final article of this issue, Jani Ylönen's "A Created Adult and the Ideal Childhood: Genetic Technology, Childhood, and Class in Anne Charnock's *A Calculated Life*," continues the analysis of speculative forms of reproduction, by connecting questions of genetic technology to discourses on class and childhood.

Moreover, if you have ever pondered what the “speculativeness” of speculative fiction actually means, you will not want to miss our Editor-in-Chief, Essi Varis’ edited correspondence with her fellow postdoctoral researchers, Elise Kraatila, Hanna-Riikka Roine, and Sarah Bro Trasmundi. In “Conversation: What, How, Where, and Why is Speculation?” they discuss the possibilities of (re-)defining speculation as an epistemological practice that could bridge some methodological gaps, and – perhaps – even make us slightly cannier, freer, and more mindful readers, citizens, and human beings.

To round out the issue, our reviews editor Jari Käkälä brings us a brace of five book reviews, complemented by two dissertation reviews. Alicja Jakha reviews Gavin Miller’s *Science Fiction and Psychology*, a book exploring both how psychology impacts on science fiction and how science fiction portrays psychological theories. Fitting with the theme of our prefatory, José Manuel Ferrández Bru reviews *Nólë Hyarmenillo. An Anthology of Iberian Scholarship on Tolkien*, edited by Nuno Simões Rodrigues, Martin Simonson, and Angélica Varandas. While Tolkien certainly isn’t obscure, Iberian scholarship on his work has been overlooked – a situation this anthology begins to remedy with nine chapters spanning semiotics, sociology, comparative mythology, and literary analysis from outside the Northern European and Anglophone sphere. B. L. King reviews Gary Westfahl’s *The Rise and Fall of American Science Fiction, from the 1920s to the 1960s*, in which Westfahl analyzes many aspects of American Pulp and Golden Age science fiction, including authors, well-known texts, subgenres, art, and trends. Soni Wadhwa reviews *Sideways in Time: Critical Essays on Alternate History Fiction*, edited by Glyn Morgan and C. Palmer-Patel, an anthology that identifies the contours of an understudied subgenre and applies critical inquiry to contextualize alternate history’s critical discussion, generic history, and defining features. Daniel A. Rabuzzi reviews Carlyne Larrington’s *The Norse Myths That Shape the Way We Think*, a work with appeal for both academics and the broader public, which puts current literary, ludic, and cinematic adaptations of Norse mythology into a nuanced historical framework. Continuing to explore the enduring appeal of Norse myths and lifeways, Elise Kraatila reviews Anna Bark Persson’s dissertation *Steel as the Answer? Viking Bodies, Power, and Masculinity in Anglophone Fantasy Literature 2006–2016*, which examines the various ideas of masculinity that the Viking motif embodies in contemporary fantasy fiction through the lens of gender studies. Anna Bark Persson then turns the tables and reviews Elise Kraatila’s dissertation, *The Crisis of Representation and Speculative Mimesis: Rethinking Relations Between Fiction and Reality in 21st-century Fantasy Storytelling*. It contributes to the fields of narratology and fantasy studies by asking what the speculative use of fantasy is – and why fantasy is growing in popularity at the very same moment as “the real world” is understood to be increasingly ungraspable.

We hope this issue adds spice your holiday reading. If it inspires you to contribute your own thoughts on topics in speculative fiction, we welcome articles (or essays, interviews, and other texts) for 1/2024 until the end of the year. Best sparkly, jingly, fragrant wishes for the season from all of us at *Fafnir*!

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