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Hear the sledges with the bells -  
Silver bells!  
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!  
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,  
In the icy air of night!  
While the stars that oversprinkle  
All the heavens, seem to twinkle  
With a crystalline delight;  
Keeping time, time, time,  
In a sort of Runic rhyme,  
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells  
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
Bells, bells, bells -  
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

(Edgar Allan Poe, “The Bells”, from *The Works of the late Edgar Allan Poe, vol II*)

The fourth and last issue of *Fafnir*'s second year is now in our midst. We are proud to present such a full and extensive selection of science fiction and fantasy research for our expert audience. There are a total of four peer-reviewed research articles, an essay edited from a *lectio praecursoria* of a doctoral defense, and three book-reviews which discuss topical works of science fiction and fantasy research.

The issue at hand demonstrates some of the major influences and angles of speculative fiction, such as classic Science Fiction, J. R. R. Tolkien, and the *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic. At the same time, the issue is clearly multidisciplinary.

In her article “Hobbits, Ents, and Dæmons: Ecocritical Thought Embodied in the Fantastic”, Gry Ulstein discusses the occurrence of ecocritical thought in two canonical fantasy epics, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and *His Dark Materials* by Philip Pullman. Ulstein argues that fantasy fiction has an intrinsic exploratory potential for ecocritical ideas because the strong immersive aspect of the genre entices the reader to open up for a less anthropocentric view of the world.

Laura-Marie von Czarnowsky's article “‘Power and all its secrets’: Engendering Magic in Neil Gaiman's *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*” focuses on fantasy, (female) magic, and feminist potential in Gaiman's most recent adult novel. Gaiman is often seen as a writer of feminist sensitivities, but in *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* he goes even further by presenting the power

of magic as an exclusively female concept. Von Czarnowsky argues, however, that it the text subverts its own feminist potential in its advocacy of motherhood as paradigmatic femininity.

In his article, “Why Do The Heavens Beckon Us? Revisiting Constructions of Home and Identity in Ray Bradbury’s *The Martian Chronicles*,” Christian Ylagan discusses colonial thematics of Bradbury’s classical work. Specifically, he problematizes the notions of home and identity from both ontological and ethical perspectives that subvert canonical ways of reading science fiction narratives, especially those from the genre’s Golden Age.

In our only non-English article, “Myyttisestä fantasiaksi: Etsivät matkalla Pohjolaan” (“From Mythical into Fantastic: Detectives on a Journey into Northland”) Merja Leppälahti discusses a journey into Pohjola (or *Northland*) in the *Kalevala*, and how this mythical journey is represented as a narrative technique in two contemporary Finnish detective novels, *Roger Repo ja tuonen väki* by Harri V. Hietikko and *Väinämöisen vyö* by Mikko Karppi. In particular, she focuses on the way the mythical elements of folktales are transformed into the elements of fantasy.

We are also proud to present our editor Jyrki Korpua’s *lectio praecursoria* “Constructive Mythopoetics in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *Legendarium*.” It is based on Korpua’s doctoral dissertation, which he defended on November 13, 2015 at the University of Oulu. Korpua discusses the logic and elements on which Tolkien’s texts and his fantasy world are constructed. In this essay, Korpua concentrates on the select examples of constructive mythopoetics.

In addition to the four articles and *lectio praecursoria*, this issue includes three literary reviews and a seminar report. James Hamby discusses Brett M. Rogers and Benjamin Eldon Stevens (eds.), *Classical Traditions in Science Fiction*, a comprehensive treatment of the tradition of science fiction. Essi Vatiilo reviews Aino-Kaisa Koistinen’s dissertation *The Human Question in Science Fiction Television: (Re)Imagining Humanity in Battlestar Galactica, Bionic Woman and V*, which deals with the so called human question in science fiction television. In Finnish, Kaisa Kortekallio reviews Juha Raipola’s dissertation *Ihmisen rajoilla: Epävarma tulevaisuus ja ei-inhimilliset toimijuudet Leena Krohnin Pereat munduksessa*, which focuses on representations of the future and future-oriented thinking in Finnish writer Leena Krohn’s work. Last but not least, Jari Ylönen reports from the seminar “Reconfiguring Human and Non-Human: Texts, Images and Beyond,” which was held in Jyväskylä in October.

As the editors of the journal, we would like to thank you for the year 2015! This is also the last issue edited by Päivi Väättänen, as she steps aside as editor-in-chief in the end of this year. Hanna and Jyrki would like to thank Päivi on behalf of Fafnir.

We hope that you have enjoyed this year as much as we have - and that you enjoy this extensive issue at hand. Happy holidays!